

# Clearing the Fog: An Overview of Policy

OCTOBER 2005

**FUTURE FIT:  
CHRISTIAN FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES IN AOTEAROA  
(STAGE ONE)**



## **NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Street Address:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Anglican House, 18 Eccleston Hill, Thorndon, Wellington.

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 12-090, Thorndon, Wellington

**Phone:** (04) 473 2627

**Fax:** (04) 473 2624

**E-Mail:** [admin@nzccss.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzccss.org.nz)

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Christian social services are committed to creating a supportive society, one which cares for and supports its most vulnerable citizens. Members of New Zealand Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) do this by providing a range of practical services that help to nurture children, guide young people and support caregivers and families. This report has been written to help our members to understand the key government policies related to children and families that may have an impact on their valuable work. It has been written with a focus on translating policy-speak into everyday language.

In July 2004 NZCCSS published a paper that described what we think is needed for New Zealand to have an effective system to support children, young people and families. Components of an effective support system include: a range of services (across a continuum), a range of stakeholders, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, good coordination between the stakeholders, respectful and professional relationships, adequate resources, the delivery of the right kind of interventions at the right time, and last but not least, enough skilled people to carry out their roles.

Approximately twenty key policy documents are examined in light of their contribution towards creating an effective system to support children, young people and families. A brief explanation is provided on what each policy seeks to do and why, followed by an assessment of what progress has been made in turning policy into action.

### ***Key Findings:***

- A shortage of skilled workers is a priority concern for government across a number of disciplines including education, social work, health and youth development. In order to address these concerns departments have developed workforce capacity strategies. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has begun work on how to build the capacity and capability of Non Government Organisations (NGOs) who work with families.
- It is imperative that the government provides sufficient support to NGOs to enable them to expand their capacity and capability given the move to introduce a differential response, that is, the new option to refer care and protection notifications to NGOs for assistance if the preliminary assessment by CYF indicates that a full care and protection investigation is not warranted.
- Most strategies have recognised the need to keep the key agencies, including NGOs, well informed. Some positive moves have been made to collect and share information on effective interventions (for example the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse), to improve planning (Local Service Mapping), to make it easier to find the right service (MSD's online National Directory) and to better direct funding (Family Violence Funding Circuit Breaker).
- Policies almost always identify poor coordination as a barrier to working effectively, and the care and protection sector has been no exception. With increasing numbers of public servants working on issues related to children and families it is difficult to see how the government will manage to overcome on-going problems of fragmentation. It should be noted however, that the Government does want to engage with the NGO sector and is frequently seeking feedback on discussion documents.

- It is frequently acknowledged by government in policy documents that the solutions to social problems cannot be addressed by government alone. In the care and protection sector, the contribution of NGOs is also widely acknowledged as significant. The move by the Department of Child Youth and Family Services (CYF) to introduce a Differential Responses Model (DRM) reflects a formalisation through legislation of the integral contribution that New Zealand NGOs make to protecting children from harm or neglect.
- In order for a sector to perform well, it is essential that the key agencies and organisations are clear about their roles. Much thought has gone into clarifying roles at a policy level in the care and protection sector. Both the Brown Ministerial Review and the CYF Baseline Review looked into defining what CYF should be doing and what is best done by other agencies.
- The exact nature of the role of NGOs in the care and protection sector is less easily defined. What is clear from research by CYF on NGOs experiences in the Demand Management work, is that NGOs are adamant that they do not want any changes in their services (via Demand Management or DRM) to affect their relationships with families, or to detract from their separate and distinct identity.
- A key issue for NGOs is the compliance costs associated with contracts. This issue is particularly important in the current environment because government is offering NGOs new roles and responsibilities. But few policies included in this overview provided concrete ways to improve contract planning, coordination and compliance processes. It appears that in areas where government is increasing investment, compliance costs are also rising.

In terms of the components that make up 'an effective system to support children and families' there appears to be the right ingredients – a wide range of services and a wide range of agencies and organisations involved, if not necessarily, the right quantities/qualities.

The workforce capacity work being instigated by government is essential and NZCCSS will continue to monitor developments in this area on behalf of our members. Some further work needs to be done on creating an environment that promotes good working relationships between government and NGOs.

The work that has been done on clarifying roles and involving NGOs in policy development is encouraging. Further work needs to be done to achieve a real reduction in compliance costs for service providers.

Securing adequate resources is likely to always be an issue for NGOs, but there are signs that in a buoyant economy there are some winners if your service fits within government priorities.

Unfortunately the valuable contribution made by NGOs who focus on preventative services does not appear to have been given the recognition it deserves by government. NZCCSS will continue to advocate for greater support for this essential area of work.

*Note: More detailed information on each policy mentioned is available in the Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries Report.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We live in a dynamic and complex environment. New Zealand has thirty-five public service departments all busy carrying out different responsibilities and churning out more and more work everyday. A number of these departments are involved in work that affects children and families, from the care and protection services provided by CYF, through to the less well-known human rights and child rights work being led by the Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD). It is difficult to get an overall sense of the direction of government policy because of the volume and range of activity taking place. This report aims to address this by translating a scan of policies into a reader-friendly overview.

We anticipate that this report will help NZCCSS member agencies to gain a better understanding of what changes are taking place in government policies that could impact on the services they provide for children, young people and families. This policy overview seeks to give NZCCSS members a policy snapshot and highlight some of the issues they need to be kept informed about.

It has not been possible to include all policies that may impact on children and families in the policy overview. Rather, the report focuses on the key agencies and their main policies and activities. A number of smaller initiatives are also mentioned to give our members a more accurate picture of what is happening, without being swamped with detail.

This report forms the first stage in the *Future Fit: Christian Family Support Services in Aotearoa* project. More detailed information on a range of policies is provided in summary table format in a complementary report entitled *Future Fit: Policy Scan Reference Tables*. A second stage report is due in March 2006 and the third and final report is expected to be completed by June 2006.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

### 2.1 Key Agencies and Shared Kaupapa/Philosophy

In July 2004 NZCCSS published a paper that described what we think is needed for New Zealand to have an effective system to support children, young people and families. Stakeholders in the system range from Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Iwi organisations to government agencies such as health, education, social development and CYF. All the key agencies agree at a fundamental level on what they, individually and collectively, are trying to achieve:

*“...Christian social services, other NGOs, Iwi and indeed the government are all seeking to develop an effective system to support children, young people and families. This support involves protection from harm as part of the wider objective that children, young people and families flourish. Specifically children require nurturing, young people require guidance and parents require support; all within the context of belonging to a supportive community.”<sup>1</sup>*

### 2.2 The Service Continuum

Within the system, the needs of children and families vary greatly and it is useful to think of the provision of support in terms of a continuum. The continuum starts with general family support and early intervention activities at one end, extends to more

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<sup>1</sup> Towards An Effective System to Support Children, Young People and Families, NZCCSS, July 2004:2

targeted support services for at risk families (in the middle), and moves to crisis intervention activities to address serious issues of harm and neglect at the other end.

### **2.3 Essential Components of an Effective System**

Components of an effective system include: a range of services (the continuum), a range of stakeholders, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, good coordination between the stakeholders, respectful and professional relationships, adequate resources, the delivery of the right kind of interventions at the right time, and last, but not least, enough skilled people to carry out their roles.<sup>2</sup> In the policy scan that follows, it will become apparent that many government policies are seeking to address specific components of the support system listed above, with varying degrees of success. This paper aims to clarify where good progress is being made, where work to address problems is still in its infancy, and where it appears that issues are being overlooked.

## **3.0 SETTING THE SCENE**

### **3.1 Government Concerns for Children, Young People and Families**

In January 2003 the Government released the *Sustainable Development for New Zealand Programme of Action* and identified that 'investing in child and youth development' was a priority area. In December 2004 a document called *Opportunity for All New Zealanders* was also published. Again, priority areas for government action were identified; some of which directly related to the government's concern regarding poor outcomes for children and young people. Research by MSD on indicators of well-being for children and young people also highlighted some problem areas.

In these publications the government has clearly expressed its concern about the following issues:

- relatively high levels of child abuse and neglect in New Zealand (compared with other OECD<sup>3</sup> countries)
- low educational achievement of students from disadvantaged families, and subsequent poor longer term outcomes for these students
- relatively high proportion of young people not involved in school, work or training
- inadequate living standards for nearly one-third of New Zealand children
- a range of poor health outcomes (such as relatively high rates of suicide, accidental death and unwanted teenage pregnancies), and
- a disproportionate amount of offending committed by a small but persistent group of young offenders.

Areas for improvement in the rights of children and young people across government and wider community have also been identified in the recently released *New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights: Priorities for Action 2005-2010* and in the *Five Year Work Programme to Implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCROC), being lead by MYD.

### **3.2 Summary of Government Policy Responses**

Put very simply, the Government has recognised at a policy level that there are some things that it could be doing better to support and protect children and to strengthen families. Many of the improvements being sought are outlined in this policy scan. To

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<sup>2</sup> Towards An Effective System to Support Children, Young People and Families, NZCCSS, July 2004:2-3

<sup>3</sup> Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development



improve outcomes for children and their families specific strategies and government investment is required. The policies and activities listed in Table 1 summarise some of government's key responses to concerns about children, young people and families.

**Table 1**  
**Government Responses to Key Issues**

Issue	Addressed by	Lead Agency
Child Abuse and Neglect/Family Violence	Key Policies <sup>4</sup> Te Rito New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy Care and Protection Blueprint Child Youth and Family Statement of Intent 2005-06 Ministry of Social Development Statement of Intent 2005-06 Agenda for Children Action Area 4 Activity 7 and 13 in UNCROC Five Year Work Programme	MSD MSD MSD MYD
	Other Activities Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families & Ministerial Team	
Poverty	Agenda for Children – Action Area 3 Working for Families (Budgets 2004 and 2005)	
Poor Educational Outcomes	Pathways to the Future 2002 -2012 Schooling Strategy 2005-2010 Activity 19 in UNCROC Five Year Work Programme Student Engagement Initiative	Ministry of Education MYD Ministry of Education
Poor Health Outcomes (including mental health)	Ministry of Health Statement of Intent 2005-06 New Zealand Primary Health Care Strategy Te Tahuhu Improving Mental Health 2005-2010 Budget 2005 Child Health Activities 16-17 in UNCROC Five Year Work Programme	Ministry of Health MYD
Youth Offending	Youth Offending Strategy 2002 Activities 1-4 in UNCROC Five Year Work Programme Youth Justice Capacity Review by CYF (CYF Statement of Intent 2006/06)	Ministry of Justice MYD CYF
Human/Child Rights	UNCROC Five Year Work programme 2004 – 2008 New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights 2005-2010	MYD Human Rights Commission
Child and Youth Development	Ministry of Social Development Statement of Intent 2005/06 Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa Ministry of Youth Development Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector Family and Community Services Families Commission Children's Commissioner	MYD MSD MSD

### 3.3 Structure of the Policy Scan

In the next section each issue from Table 1 will be discussed separately. The discussion will include

<sup>4</sup> Significant historical policies that have helped to inform current family violence and child abuse policies include the 2000 Ministerial Review entitled *Care and Protection is about Adult Behaviour* (sometimes referred to as the Brown Review) and the 2003 *CYF First Principles Baseline Review*. For further information of these documents refer to the *Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries Report*.

- what the main policies say (what they intended to do and why) and
- what the current status of the policies are (in terms of implementation).

The paper will finish with a summary of strengths and weaknesses of the policies reviewed in terms of what components of an 'effective support system' (mentioned earlier) the policies seek to address. A list will also be provided in Appendix 1 of on-going issues that NZCCSS will continue to monitor on behalf of members.

## **4.0 THE POLICY SCAN**

### **4.1 Child Abuse, Neglect and Family Violence**

#### **4.1.1 The Care and Protection Blueprint 2003**

The Care and Protection Blueprint was released by MSD in 2003 and sought to improve care and protection services for children and young people by improving the way that government and community agencies work together.<sup>5</sup> It was developed in response to high levels of child abuse and neglect, the large number of agencies working in this area, and the lack of a coordinated strategy.

The Care and Protection Blueprint was made up of ten Action Areas. Progress in implementing the Blueprint has been mixed and a number of the Action Areas have been integrated into the Te Rito New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy. For example Action Area 5 on promoting evaluation and building knowledge of effective services is being met by the New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House (Action Area 8 of Te Rito). Action Area 6 of the Blueprint on improving coordination and collaboration was picked up by the equivalent action in the Te Rito Strategy.

MSD is continuing to work with CYF on developing care and protection outcome measures (Action Area 4). Work to incorporate the views of children and families into the planning and supervision of care and protection issues (Action Area 3) was somewhat superficially met through the development of a web-based tool kit. The development of a Blueprint Investment Strategy had a strong start in Phase 1 and led to a package of proposals receiving Budget 2004 and 2005 funding. Unfortunately Phase 2 was refocused as the "Effective Responses Project" and then subsided from view with the exception of the 2005 Budget initiative to improve services for children who witness family violence.

Significant and on-going progress is being made to address workforce issues (Action Area 8). Work carried out by the Workforce Development Group in 2002 helped to inform the recent NGO Family Support Services Workforce Programme of Action being led by MSD (and discussed in more detail later).

It is unclear whether there will be on-going work directly related to the Blueprint. A revised version of the Blueprint was due for release in 2004 but didn't happen. Officials now plan to release a newsletter updating the public on progress. The Blueprint Steering Group was disbanded last year and has reformed as the Care and Protection Expert Reference Group.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It was informed by recommendations made in the Ministerial Review by Michael Brown in December 2000 entitled "Care and Protection is About Adult Behaviour". Refer to p23 of the Clearing the Fog Summaries Report for further information on the Ministerial Review.

<sup>6</sup> NZCCSS has representation on the Care and Protection Expert Reference Group.

#### **4.1.2 Te Rito New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2002**

The aim of Te Rito Strategy is to provide a framework for implementing a plan of action to address family violence issues. It was felt that a framework was required because family violence is a significant and complex issue needing an integrated community and whole-of-government response. Te Rito is a five-year plan with a significant work programme focussed on five goal areas with eighteen areas of action.

A large amount of work has been generated through Te Rito and some of the milestones have included the three Family Violence Intervention Programme pilots for Work and Income clients, seventeen Family Violence Circuit Breaker Teams to help plan funding, the newly established National Clearinghouse to collect and share information on family violence, funding of nearly thirty programmes through the Te Rito Collaborative Fund and nearly three-hundred approved family violence providers listed in the Family and Community Services (FACS) National Directory. Additional and complementary activities have also taken place such as the expansion of the CYF pilot on public awareness raising known as Everyday Communities, and the establishment via Police of four Family Safety Teams.

Due to the amount of work associated with the Te Rito Strategy and the number of agencies involved, it has been a challenge to keep Te Rito on-track. Problems of duplication arose between Te Rito and the Care and Protection Blueprint in some areas, as mentioned above. In 2004 officials acknowledged that Te Rito needed to be refocused "to better complement other initiatives underway to address child and family safety and security issues".<sup>7</sup>

Family violence remains a high priority for Government. It was identified in *Opportunity for All New Zealanders* as a critical issue and a Ministerial Team has been established "to provide leadership across the state sector and promote public debate".<sup>8</sup> The Ministerial Team is being supported by a *Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families*. Members of this new Taskforce include Chief Executives of government agencies, NGOs, the Children's Commissioner and others. The Taskforce will focus on building on Te Rito "developing a suite of actions aimed at preventing family violence within families and provide advice to Ministers on the direction of future investments".<sup>9</sup>

It is difficult to see what these new mechanisms will add, but perhaps duplications in strategies, as demonstrated by Te Rito and the Blueprint, could be avoided by having all the relevant Chief Executives around the table at the beginning. It is clear that family violence remains a priority for government and a significant investment is being made in this area.

#### **4.1.3 Child Youth and Family (CYF) Statement of Intent 2005/06**

The CYF Statement of Intent for 2005/06 outlines the Department's direction over the next three to five years. It builds on the three themes of the First Principles Baseline Review – stabilise, learn and improve. Twelve strategic initiatives are outlined to help the Department to achieve the vision of safe children and young people in strong families free from abuse, neglect and offending.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.justice.govt.nz/crime-reduction/strategies-actions.html>

<sup>8</sup> Te Rito News, June/July 2005:2

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

It would be fair to say that CYF has achieved the stabilisation phase and is now concentrating on learning and improving. A number of the strategic initiatives relate to internal changes to bring about improvements. Of more interest to this paper are the following initiatives:

### *Implementing Differential Responses Model (DRM)*

As many of you are probably aware, CYF is seeking to expand the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 to enable NGOs to have an earlier role in intervention with families. The CYF Amendment Bill (No.4) seeks to modify the way CYF can respond to care and protection notifications under Section 15. The legislative change allows CYF to undertake a preliminary assessment that will determine the most appropriate response from a menu of options<sup>10</sup>:

- A care and protection investigation by a CYF social worker
- A child and family assessment by CYF or an approved agency (could include approved NGOs)
- A referral to other organisations including NGOs or other government agencies
- Other actions or steps to give effect to the CYF&P Act
- A decision that no further action is required.

Currently the CYF Amendment Bill (No.4) is awaiting its Second Reading. CYF will begin testing DRM from October 2005 in one site in each of CYF four regions. The test sites will be reviewed with a view to modifying tools and processes before implementing across the country from July 2006.

DRM signals a significant change in the way care and protection services are to be delivered in the future. For Child and Family Assessor approved NGOs it means earlier engagement with families, with different responsibilities. For the Department, it is hoped that DRM will allow their resources to be concentrated on core social work services, rather than broadly based family support and community engagement. For NGOs, there are workforce capacity and capability issues if DRM is rolled-out. The NGO sector will also need to consider the potential for changed relationships with families for NGOs approved to undertake child and family assessments.

There are resource implications for both CYF and the NGO sector should the demand for services increase, particularly given the predicted shortage in qualified social workers identified in the *CYF Workforce Capability Development Strategy* (2004).

### *Review of Community Funding*

A Review of Community Funding is expected to be completed by 30 June 2006. It will reflect a new regional funding environment and will take into account progress in implementing DRM. It is unclear at this stage what the outcome of the review will be but it is worth being aware of.

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<sup>10</sup> Developing the Differential Response Model, [www.cyf.govt.nz](http://www.cyf.govt.nz) 14 June 2005

### *Enhancing Family Decision Making*<sup>11</sup>

CYF is carrying out empirical research over the next eighteen months on the Family Group Conference (FGC) process and family decision-making. They will look at the impact of various people attending FGCs and the impact that this participation will have on achieving principles of the CYP&F Act e.g. healing and reconciliation. According to CYF officials the findings of this research, which includes an international literature review, will contribute to an FGC Conference being hosted by CYF in November 2006.

### *Youth Justice Capability Review*<sup>12</sup>

This project is in response to the Baseline Review recommendation that the Department review the capability of supervisors and social workers who work in the area of youth justice. The information gathered in Phase I identified a range of issues facing staff including skills, resources and variability in service provision across the country. Phase II (currently underway) is focussing on how to address this inconsistency. It remains to be seen whether the Service Process Model and implementation report on what is required for frontline staff to apply the Model consistently, due by the end of October, will lead to better support for youth offenders.

#### **4.1.4 MB: Supporting Vulnerable Children and Young People**

A key focus for the next three years for the Ministry is the implementation of an Early Intervention Programme for vulnerable children and strengthening care and protection services. Examples of activities in the Early Intervention Programme include early intervention and education support pilots of vulnerable parents of under three year olds, expansion of Family Start, increased childcare assistance and increased living standards through the Working for Families package. MSD is also working on initiatives aimed at young people, such as Youth Transition Service pilots, StudyLink Advisory Service, Step-Up Scholarships and research on improving youth justice outcomes.

In terms of care and protection work, MSD is leading the new *Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families*, carrying out research on what the sector looks like and is leading the new *Family Support Workforce Programme of Action*.

#### **4.1.5 United Nations Convention on the Rights Of the Child (UNCROC) Work Programme 2004 - 2008**

##### *Corporal Punishment – Section 59*

Two of the twenty-eight activities in the UNCROC Work Programme relate to child abuse. Activity 7 looks at corporal punishment, specifically Section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 which allows parents or caregivers to use force if it is 'reasonable'. The United Nations (UN) Committee maintains that this is inconsistent with UNCROC. In 2003 the Government decided to deliver a public awareness campaign on alternatives to physical punishment rather than instigate legislative change. Nearly \$11m was allocated to SKIP: Strategies with Kids – Information for Parents.

In the middle of 2005 Sue Bradford's Private Members Bill to Repeal Section 59 was drawn from the Member's Bill Ballot. It has passed its First Reading and its reinstatement will need to be considered by the new Parliament after the election.

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<sup>11</sup> Email of 26 July 2005 from the Manager Maori Services Department, CYF

<sup>12</sup> Information provided by a CYF official in email correspondence 19 July 2005

### *Assistance to Child Abuse Victims*

The UN Committee has recommended that New Zealand expands services and programmes aimed at preventing children abuse and supporting victims, and continues to improve the coordination of these services. New services in 2004/05 include Budget 2005 funding for 45 child advocates in community based NGOs, increased funding for a range of children's services (e.g. early intervention), and the development of guidelines for the prevention of family violence by the Ministry of Health. It is anticipated that the newly established Ministerial Team and Taskforce on Reducing Violence Within Families will improve leadership and coordination.<sup>13</sup>

#### **4.1.6 Agenda for Children: Action Area 4**

New Zealand's Agenda for Children, published by MSD in 2002, is a strategy aimed at "improving the lives of our children"<sup>14</sup>. It targets the 0-17 year age group and is premised on the belief that in order to improve the well-being of children different approaches to policy development and services for children are needed. The Agenda for Children proposed a range of policy and research initiatives focused in seven key action areas, the fourth of which relates to 'addressing violence, with an emphasis on reducing bullying'.

The Children's Issues Centre was commissioned to undertake case study research with three primary schools to identify appropriate ways to promote positive school cultures and reduce bullying. The Report was released to all schools in New Zealand in 2004 through the Education Gazette and is available on the MSD website. Unfortunately this appears to be the sum total of new work generated by the Agenda in this Action Area.

## **4.2 Child Poverty**

### **4.2.1 Agenda for Children: Action Area 3**

Ending child poverty is the third of seven action areas in New Zealand's Agenda for Children. Specifically the Agenda sought to strengthen the government's efforts to eliminate child poverty by establishing a research programme on child poverty to guide MSD policy work and by starting a longitudinal survey of children. The longitudinal study is in the developmental stage and the research on child poverty is being implemented through MSD's Child Well-being Indicator Development work. A modelling and analysis exercise on the impact of child poverty of the Working for Families Package has also been completed.<sup>15</sup>

### **4.2.2 Working for Families Package and Childcare Initiatives**

Both Budget 2004 and Budget 2005 have provided significant investment in raising incomes through the Working for Families Package. It has been criticised by child poverty advocates<sup>16</sup> for failing to address poverty for New Zealand's poorest children, those whose parents are in receipt of a benefit. NZCCSS is concerned that the recent pre-election move to increase the income thresholds to enable more middle income families to receive support through 'Working for Families' will do nothing to address the child deprivation of the non-working poor. If anything, wealth disparities between working and non-working parents will increase.

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<sup>13</sup> Te Rito News Issue 1 June/July 2005:1-2

<sup>14</sup> New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making Life Better for Children, June 2002:6

<sup>15</sup> Working for Families: The Impact of Child Poverty, Bryan Perry, MSD, July 2004

<sup>16</sup> According to the Child Poverty Action Group's report "Cut Price Kids" the Budget 2004 Working for Families Package is flawed because it leaves approximately 175,000 children (those with parents on a benefit) with very little help.

Additionally, the Government has made the commitment to increase access to early childhood education by making twenty free hours per week available to three and four year olds. This policy was recently amended to allow private as well as community-based centres eligible for the funding. It remains to be seen whether there will be sufficient capacity to meet demand, particularly in metropolitan centres.

In terms of child poverty, the Government is seeking to make it more attractive to move into work by reducing childcare barriers and increasing the amount of money low income working families are eligible for through the Working for Families package. However, nothing substantive is being offered to help beneficiary families and the package appears to ignore the needs of the families that are unable to work.

Whilst the Working for Families package will increase the levels of Family Support (from April 2007) and the Accommodation Supplement, these will be counted as part of a family's income and in effect means that the amount a family can receive through a Special Benefit is reduced<sup>17</sup>. The Special Benefit is also to be replaced next year by a new benefit called Temporary Additional Support, that will be much less flexible than its predecessor, lower than the Special Benefit and narrower in application<sup>18</sup>.

### **4.3 Poor Educational Outcomes**

#### **4.3.1 Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki: A Ten Year Plan for Early Childhood Education, 2002**

The Ministry of Education published Pathways to the Future in 2002 with the objective of outlining the strategies to lift educational achievement for all New Zealanders aged eight years and under. Particular emphasis has been placed on improving access to quality early childhood education (ECE) and the need to improve outcomes for children from low socio-economic backgrounds, particularly Pacific and Maori children.

The ten-year plan has been running for three years and significant changes are underway in the ECE sector. The Pathways to the Future Strategy has three goals; to increase participation in quality ECE services, to improve the quality of ECE services and to promote collaborative relationships. Three major pieces of work have emerged from the strategic plan. These include a review of regulations and rules for ECE services (commenced in 2002 and continuing), a review of funding (completed) and an evaluation.

The Funding Review<sup>19</sup> has led to changes in the ways ECE services are funded and increased in the level of funding, effective from 1 April 2005. In Budget 2004 an additional \$307m was pledged over four years to make ECE services more accessible and affordable. This is in addition to the \$412m already committed. The new funding has been designed to lift quality and is linked to the level of teacher qualifications and child to adult ratios. Centres with more registered teaching staff receive higher rates of funding.

New top-up funding is also available for isolated rural areas. Increases in childcare subsidies provided by Work and Income New Zealand, as part of the Working for Families Package, are also aimed at increasing accessibility to ECE services.

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<sup>17</sup> Budget 2004 Information Fact Sheet 10

<sup>18</sup> According to Sue Bradford's speech the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading of the Future Directions (Working for Families) Bill on May 28 2004, Government Estimates show that changes in the Special Benefit will save the Government \$7m in 2004, \$45m in 2005, \$57m in 2006 and \$91m in 2007.

<sup>19</sup>ECE Funding Changes on [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz)

### **4.3.2 Schooling Strategy 2005 – 2010: Making a Bigger Difference for All Students, 2005**

In July this year the Ministry of Education released a five-year strategy with the overall aim that all students achieve their potential. The Schooling Strategy has three priority areas: firstly that all students experience effective teaching, that children's learning is nurtured by families and whanau and all decision-making is evidence based. This is a high level policy that outlines strategic direction. It does not contain an implementation plan or specific resources. It builds on existing work, has been developed in consultation with many interested parties, and in the words of the Minister "it [the strategy] provides a framework for ongoing effort and improvement"<sup>20</sup>. Translated, this means the Schooling Strategy will have no immediate impact.

### **4.3.3 Student Engagement Initiative**

In October 2003 the government committed to spend an extra \$8.6m over four years on what is now called the Student Engagement Initiative (SEI)<sup>21</sup>. The SEI involves a number of strategies aimed at "improved attendance, reducing non-enrolments, fewer suspensions and exclusions, and fewer exemptions from school".<sup>22</sup> The SEI has eight strands of work which very briefly include:

- More short term funding in areas with high truancy rates to carry out research on the nature of the problem and to establish more effective responses
- Education Review Office review of truancy management (completed in 2004 and currently being considered by the Ministry of Education)
- On-going improvements in truancy services, structure and funding arrangements
- Testing a streamlined prosecution process by trialling a template to record the evidential paperwork required for court. The trial began in late 2004 in South Auckland and has had encouraging results<sup>23</sup>.
- Testing the effectiveness of early electronic notification systems, recently completed successfully in five schools<sup>24</sup>
- Reducing enrolment exemptions for 15 year olds by working with thirty schools with high exemption rates. The Ministry provides information on options and programmes to keep students enrolled and processes around approving exemptions are being tightened<sup>25</sup>
- Research by the Ministry on reasons schools give for refusing to enrol students<sup>26</sup>
- Review of processes for the re-enrolment of excluded students.

Budget 2005 also provided funding for every intermediate and high school throughout New Zealand to access a new electronic student enrolment system by the end of

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<sup>20</sup> Trevor Mallard, Minister of Education, Minister's Foreword, Schooling Strategy 2005 -2010

<sup>21</sup> Incorporates the Student Reduction Initiative which works with schools that have a high suspension rate for Maori students.

<sup>22</sup> Student Engagement Initiative paper presented at District Truancy Service Training Seminar, Whangarei, May 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Wise Up, Issue 81, 26 April 2005

<sup>24</sup> Parents and caregivers are automatically notified of absences through a range of technologies including email, text messages, mobile and landline calls, Wise-Up Issue 81, 26 April 2005

<sup>25</sup> The Student Engagement Initiative Paper presented at District Truancy Service Training Seminar, Whangarei, May 2005

<sup>26</sup> Results of a survey undertaken by the Ministry of Education in 2004 identified that the two main reasons why students were refused enrolment were either their past behaviour (sometimes unsubstantiated) or their special educations that some school felt under-resourced to support. The Ministry is planning a workshop in Wellington in October 2005 to develop a nationally consistent response to issues raised in the survey (Education Management Policy: Student Engagement Initiative, Final Report on SEI #6: School Initiated Barriers to Enrolment).



Term 1 next year. Schools will complete an electronic form over the Internet when a new student enrolls or a student leaves. The central register will allow the Ministry to get early alerts on non-enrolled students, that is, those who have been out of school for more than twenty days.<sup>27</sup>

#### **4.3.4 UNCROC Work Programme Activity 19**

Addressing educational disparities, that is, the differences in enrolment and drop-out rates between different ethnic groups has been identified as an area of concern by the UN Committee<sup>28</sup>. The Ministries of Youth Development and Education are responsible for monitoring progress and reporting back to government on activities to address the UN's concerns. These include activities to reduce truancy (refer to section 4.3.3) establishment of teen parent units and various policy initiatives. Work is being led by MSD on how to effectively support young parents and includes health and early childhood education.

### **4.4 Poor Health Outcomes**

#### **4.4.1 New Zealand Primary Health Care Strategy 2001**

The New Zealand Primary Health Care Strategy was published by the Ministry of Health in 2001. The strategy details the Ministry's vision for the delivery of primary health care (PHC) services over the next five to ten years and aims to guide District Health Boards (DHBs) on how to bring about changes. It is based on the premise that a strong PHC system is critical to improving health outcomes and addressing inequalities in health. The Strategy discusses six key directions to achieve the vision for PHC.

Some of the key changes include:

- The establishment of Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) as not-for-profit NGOs which serve the needs of their enrolled populations and have community representation
- Changes in funding from fee-for-service subsidies for General Practitioners (GPs) to capitation funding of PHOs, with PHOs being funded by DHBs for the provision of a set of services for those enrolled
- A requirement for PHOs to identify disadvantaged groups in their enrolled populations and address their needs, particularly services for Maori and Pacific peoples
- Service coverage descriptions by the Ministry specifying all the primary health services that DHBs will be expected to fund with minimum levels of services stipulated
- A national funding formula that reflects relative need to be established.
- Increasing the affordability of Primary health care
- A Health Workforce Advisory Committee to consider workforce issues arising from the Strategy e.g. shortages of GPs in rural areas.

In the four years since the New Zealand Primary Health Care Strategy was launched progress had been made in the establishment phase. For example, according to the Ministry of Health website there are now seventy-nine PHOs covering 3.8m New Zealanders. Access to affordable care has improved for most enrolled people with all age groups expected to be eligible for reduced fees by June 2007 if the Labour Party remains in government. Considerable work is still needed on analysing the health

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<sup>27</sup> Wise- Up Issue 81, 26 April 2005

<sup>28</sup> UNCROC Work Programme 2004-2008: 15

needs of enrolled populations and working out appropriate responses. The viability of smaller PHOs to implement the Strategy is being questioned.<sup>29</sup>

The current focus is now on consolidating PHOs. Specifically this means improving performance in chronic disease prevention, more input from communities, increased access to more affordable healthcare through PHOs and strengthened PHO infrastructure.<sup>30</sup>

The Ministry is able to consult and work with health based NGOs through a variety of mechanisms. Some of these include six monthly NGO/MOH Forums, a Health and Disability Sector NGO Working Group and a dedicated NGO Desk.

#### **4.4.2 Te Tahuu Mental Health Strategy, 2005**

The Ministry of Health has recently released its second mental health and addiction plan called Te Tahuu Mental Health Strategy. The strategy outlines the action areas in mental health and addiction for the next ten years.

Ten priority areas/challenges have been identified and reflect the Government's focus for the next three years. Four of the ten priority areas involve children and/or young people.

The Ministry has acknowledged that there is an immediate need to increase specialist services for children and young people (& older people) "who are severely affected by mental illness"<sup>31</sup> under their Building Mental Health Services Priority. This appears to exclude increased service provision for children and young people with mild to moderate mental illness. Under the Responsiveness Priority reference is made to the need for specific support for parents with mental illness or addiction who have dependent children.<sup>32</sup>

A lack of skilled people to meet the needs of different communities (children are specifically mentioned along with Maori, Pacific and Asian Peoples) is highlighted under the Workforce and Culture of Recovery Priority. It is interesting to note the reference to "opportunities for new disciplines and roles to emerge and for established, professional boundaries to continue to evolve". This alludes to the move to devolve specialist mental health services to the primary health care level.

Under the Addiction Priority, the need to broaden and align the range of services for people with both mental illness and addiction problems is identified. Special reference is made to the growing substance abuse and gambling problems among young people.

The Ministry of Health and DHBs will be developing plans on how to address the issues raised in the Te Tahuu Mental Health Strategy and an action plan is to be presented to Cabinet by March next year.

#### **4.4.3 Primary Health Care (PHC), Mental Health and Children**

Because of the significant changes in PHC and the special needs of children and young people experiencing mental illness, some additional points are worth making.

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<sup>29</sup> Evaluation of the Implementation and Intermediate Outcomes of the Primary Health Care Strategy, First Report: Overview, May 2005, Health Services Research Centre, Victoria University

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Health Statement on Intent 2005/6: 35

<sup>31</sup> Te Tahuu – Improving Mental Health 2005-2015:9

<sup>32</sup> Ibid:11

There is a known shortage of skilled mental health workers to work with both adults and children. There are also differences between DHBs regarding salaries for staff due, in part, to population-based funding formulas. This means that some DHBs will have more difficulty in recruitment and staff retention. Without proactive workforce development, any move to devolve services to the primary health care level will shift the problem rather than address it.

The Ministry of Health is focussed on providing national guidance for the development of PHO services for adults with mental health problems. No such advice is currently available regarding PHO services for children and/or young people with mental health problems.<sup>33</sup>

Currently 20% of the population at any one time experiences a mental health disorder and of this 20% only one in three receives appropriate treatment.<sup>34</sup> Research has also identified that many people who present to their General Practitioner (GP) practices with mental disorders go undetected.<sup>35</sup> If adults currently have problems accessing adequate treatment, what are the chances that children's mental health needs will be met?

It is likely that with any devolution, GPs and community based nurses will be overloaded. In the Ministry's PHO: Service Management Toolkit it recommends that "the management of people with a known mental health problem should take priority over screening to identify new cases of mental health problems".<sup>36</sup> This could lead to more people presenting to community based social services with undiagnosed mental health problems as specialist services exit and GPs come under pressure. Again, it is difficult to see how the needs of children and young people will be met when we already experience difficulty in identifying and treating adults with mental disorders.

In the case of severe mental illness, where a role for specialist services remains, it is worth noting that there are no national guidelines on how specialist mental health services and primary health services should work effectively together.<sup>37</sup> It is difficult to see how children and families with severe mental health problems will get good support if the two parties are busy sorting out their relationship.

Moreover, there will be great variations in PHC responses to mental health according to the primacy each PHO gives the issue. This could lead to difficulties for NZCCSS members (and other community based service providers) in identifying what support services are available for families in their area.

Although funding streams for youth are to improve at the PHO/GP level through increased primary health funding from July 2005, there is neither emphasis with this funding on mental health issues for youth nor any requirement to use this funding to reduce the cost of a GP visit for this client group.

#### **4.4.4 Budget 2005 - Child Health**

The 2005 Budget has heavily focussed on early intervention initiatives, expanding existing programmes and introducing new ones. \$47m has been tagged to programmes that target vulnerable children and families and include the expansion of

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<sup>33</sup> PHO Service Development Toolkit May 2004:iii

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Primary Mental Health: A Review of Opportunities, May 2002, Commissioned by the Mental Health Directorate of the Ministry of Health.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid:28

<sup>37</sup> Ibid:2

Family Start to rural communities, study awards for family start workers, pilot Parenting Support Services, funding for forty-five child advocates for child victims/witnesses of family violence, study awards for NGO staff studying towards social work degrees<sup>38</sup> and so the list goes on.

As mentioned earlier, a great deal of funding<sup>39</sup> has also been ear-marked for increasing access to, and the quality of, early childhood education and child care for working parents. There has also been an increase in funding for teachers and for schools. Funding for Special Education has increased by nearly \$31 million.

In the pre-election (post Budget) period the Labour Party has continued to make announcements, such as the free hearing tests for all newborns, free school readiness checks and the increase in Well Child checks from 6.5 to 8 visits.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear that in the 2005 Budget, one of the focus areas is support for children from birth to school age. The investment in early intervention is based on the premise that if vulnerable children are given a good start this will turn around the later likelihood of poor outcomes. What appears to be missing from this Budget is the additional investment needed in supporting families with older children who have not benefited from early intervention activities.

#### **4.4.5 UNCROC Work Programme Activities 16-17<sup>41</sup>**

The UN Committee has identified some areas where there is a need for improvement in child health outcomes (Activity 16) and adolescent health outcomes (Activity 17). Specifically, the UN Committee is concerned about immunisation coverage, relatively high infant mortality and injury rates for children and the disparity in health indicators between Maori and non-Maori children. A new committee to review maternal and perinatal deaths has been established and will report back to the Ministry of Health.<sup>42</sup> Policy is also informed by annual reports from the National Child and Youth Mortality Review Committee. The National Immunisation Register being used by DHBs will assist in improving immunisation coverage, along with the Meningococcal B Immunisation Programme which was launched in mid 2004. The Ministry of Health funds a variety of injury prevention programmes.<sup>43</sup>

In terms of adolescence, the UN Committee has expressed concern over relatively high rates of youth suicide, teenage pregnancies and alcohol abuse, and access issues around youth mental health services. A variety of activities are underway to address these including: the development of resources for teachers to use in sexuality education classes, a new all-ages suicide strategy and the need to increase the child and youth mental health and addiction workforce (as identified in Te Tahuu Improving Mental Health).

## **4.5 Youth Offending**

### **4.5.1 Youth Offending Strategy**

The Youth Offending Strategy was published by the Ministry of Justice in 2002 and sought to improve the operation of the youth justice system in order to reduce the high rates of offending and re-offending by children and young people. The Strategy focussed on three themes, seven focus areas and contained 73 specific

<sup>38</sup> "A sure start for children in need", Media Release, Hon Steve Maharey, 19 May 2005

<sup>39</sup> \$152 million over four years, Budget 2005 [www.beehive.govt.nz](http://www.beehive.govt.nz) 1 June 2005

<sup>40</sup> Dominion, 24 August 2005

<sup>41</sup> UNCROC Work Programme 2004-2008:14-15

<sup>42</sup> [www.newhealth.govt.nz/pmmrc/](http://www.newhealth.govt.nz/pmmrc/)

<sup>43</sup> [www.newhealth.govt.nz/toolkits/childhealth/13-injury.htm#13-](http://www.newhealth.govt.nz/toolkits/childhealth/13-injury.htm#13-)

recommendations. This was a sector wide strategy led by the Ministry of Justice. For the purpose of this report the discussion will centre on focus areas 3 and 4, namely 'early intervention' and 'children and young people at risk'.

It would be fair to say that the government has responded positively towards implementing early intervention proposals. Government investment in early intervention pilots and programmes has been significant in the Budgets following the release of the Youth Offending Strategy. For example, in the 2005 Budget, 28 pilot programmes are to be established to support parents of at risk children aged under four years through outreach services and parent education. This package is valued at \$6m. Local Services Mapping and the Family Violence Funding Circuit Breaker are examples of government initiatives to improve planning and provision of services. The online National Services Directory and the Family Violence National Clearinghouse are examples of ways to improve access to information on services available and best practice.

It is more difficult to accurately assess the extent to which government has implemented proposals outlined in the Youth Offending Strategy for children at risk (5-13 years) and young people at risk (14-16 years) because in many cases multiple government agencies are involved. Progress in implementation of recommendations for this group has been mixed. For example limited work has been done in the area of funding collaboration between agencies. The Ministry of Justice Crime Prevention Unit and Police have only one package of eleven community youth projects aimed at young offenders that are jointly funded and jointly managed. However the establishment of thirty Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) around the country has contributed to the goal of improving coordination and leadership.<sup>44</sup>

CYF and a range of agencies have worked together to develop an interagency strategy and investment plan to improve services for children and young people with severe anti-social behaviour problems including conduct disorder. CYF opened a severe Conduct Disorder Unit at the Epuni Residential Centre in August last year.<sup>45</sup>

Mentoring programmes, advocated in the Youth Offending Strategy are no longer flavour of the month. This may be because of the lack of programme evaluations available, and the findings by the few that have been evaluated that "generally show a depressing lack of impact".<sup>46</sup> Consequently there has been little in the way of expansion of mentoring type programmes.

Better progress has been made to improve student achievement. This includes specific strategies to reduce truancy and suspensions. The Government provides \$4m to District Truancy Services per annum and \$2m for the Suspension Reduction Initiative. Additional funding was provided from 2003 for the Student Engagement Initiative<sup>47</sup>.

Further work needs to be done to meet the recommendation to provide more specialist mental health and addiction services for young people. It was again identified as a priority for action in Te Tahuhu, the second New Zealand Health and Addiction Plan.

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<sup>44</sup> Note that YOTs have recently been required to write action plans so if you are interested in knowing what the priority issues are in your area request a copy of their action plan.

<sup>45</sup> Report to Minister of Justice supplied by a Ministry official in correspondence 30 September 2005

<sup>46</sup> Tough is not Enough: Getting Smart About Youth Crime, Kaye McLaren, Ministry of Youth Affairs June 2000:70.

<sup>47</sup> The Student Engagement Initiative involves eight sub-projects including trialling streamlined prosecution process, testing the effectiveness of an electronic notification system (where schools email or text parents re a child's absence) and reviewing re-enrolment processes for excluded students.

In the area of improving information progress in establishing a Youth Justice Minimum dataset (so the same information could be shared among key agencies) has ground to a halt because of technical difficulties. However NZCCSS members might be interested in a research based tool that has been developed to help funders and providers assess and improve the quality of the youth justice activities. The tool is known as the Youth Offending Services Effectiveness Checklist (YOSEC) and will be available in early 2006.<sup>48</sup>

Other milestones include<sup>49</sup>: additional funding in Budget 2005 for additional police youth aid staff, national training undertaken by FGC coordinators in April 2005, the rolling out of health and education assessments prior to some offenders first FGCs, and the identification of a preferred site for the Te Hurihanga programme for serious young offenders.

#### **4.5.2 CYF Youth Justice Capacity Review**

The CYF Youth Justice Review is one of the twelve strategic initiatives outlined in the CYF Statement of Intent 2005/06. It is a multi-stage project that emerged from the Baseline Review recommendation that the Department review the capability of supervisors and social workers who work in the area of youth justice. According to CYF officials the Youth Justice Capacity Review has been widened to include all systems, processes and procedures that impact on the delivery of youth justice services by frontline staff.

One of the main findings from Phase I was there is variability in the delivery of youth justice services across the country because of a range of issues facing staff, including variations in skills and resources.

Phase II is currently underway and is focused on addressing inconsistencies in service delivery identified in Phase I. The Department expect that by the end of October 2005, the Review will produce two pieces of work, a Service Process Model<sup>50</sup>, and an implementation report on what is required for frontline staff to apply the Service Process Model consistently. Additionally, an analysis of costs will be completed.

#### **4.5.3 UNCROC Work Programme Activities 1-4**

Four out of twenty-eight recommendations by the UN Committee related to youth justice in the UNCROC 2004-2008 work programme. These include:

- reviewing the minimum age of criminal prosecution which currently stands at ten years (for murder or manslaughter only),
- extending the upper age under the Children Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 to include all persons under the age of 18 years, and
- withdrawing the reservation the New Zealand Government has put on age mixing in prison, including developing a 'test of best interest'<sup>51</sup>.

The Ministry of Justice is currently carrying out further analysis on improving the effectiveness of responses to offending by children, and implications for the minimum

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<sup>48</sup> Report to Minister of Justice supplied by Ministry of Justice official in correspondence of 30 September 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> A Service Process Model is described by CYF as a process map that describes which roles (Police, Youth Advocates, Youth Justice Coordinators, Social Workers etc) give effect to each provision of the CYP&F Act and how one process flows into another.

<sup>51</sup> According to UNCROC every child deprived of liberty is required to be separated from adults unless it is in the child's best interest not to do so. Article 37(c) permits age mixing in prison when it has been identified as being in the young person's best interest, UNCROC Five Year Work Programme 2004 -2008:9.

age of prosecution. A report has yet to be presented to Ministers. Draft tests of best interest regarding the placement of young offenders remanded or sentenced to imprisonment have been completed. The Department of Corrections now has sufficient beds in youth prisons to prevent age mixing.

## **4.6 Human Rights and Child Rights**

### **4.6.1 New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights**

The Human Rights Commission and the Children's Commission have recently developed a five-year action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights for all New Zealanders. The *Human Rights in New Zealand Today* (Status Report) published in 1994 identified some areas of concern regarding the relatively high levels of poverty and abuse that New Zealand children and young people experience. The New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights has since been developed to address issues such as this.

In the section of the New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights called "Getting it right for children and young people" the outcomes sought included promoting the human rights, promoting participation, being free from violence, having access to quality education and respectful treatment of children when they are removed from family or lawfully detained. It should be noted that only half of the activities fall within the sphere of central government. Other contributors include local government, NGOs, Iwi and the wider community.

Two examples of recommendations include increasing the availability of beds in CYF and youth justice residential facilities, and reviewing the legal powers of schools to suspend, exclude, expel or refuse to enrol students. There are many more actions outlined in this plan that may be of interest to NZCCSS members. Because this is a new strategy, implementation programmes are still in development. A progress report is due before the Government in November and NZCCSS will be requesting a copy.

### **4.6.2 UNCROC Five Year Work Programme 2004 – 2008**

Please refer to previous sections for activities in the UNCROC Work Programme relevant to child abuse, poverty, education, health and justice.

## **4.7 Child and Youth Development**

### **4.7.1 Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa**

The Youth Development Strategy was published in 2002 by the then Ministry of Youth Affairs. The responsibility for implementation of the Strategy falls within the brief of the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD), which is part of MSD. The Strategy looks at how government and society can support young people aged between 12 and 24 years to develop skills to participate positively in society. It is based on the rationale that young people are an asset and their healthy development should not be left to chance in a rapidly changing world.<sup>52</sup>

This is a high level strategy that provides a statement of philosophy rather than a strategic action plan. Loss of capacity during the review of MYD interrupted the implementation of the YDSA. Consequently its implementation has been limited. MYD will be reviewing the strategy in the next eighteen months to make it more user-friendly.

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<sup>52</sup> Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa, Ministry of Youth Development 2002:10

#### **4.7.2 Update on the Ministry of Youth Development**

Within MYD a number of changes are taking place which will affect the way they support young people. Four regional hubs are being established, programmes such as Youth Corp and Conservation Corps are being reviewed (in the context of declining youth unemployment), a new local government partnership fund is being established and research on issues facing the youth development workforce has recently commenced. For further information visit their website [www.myd.govt.nz](http://www.myd.govt.nz)

#### **4.7.3 MSD Activities to Support Children and Young People**

Child and youth development is a key area in MSD's Statement of Intent 2005/06. The key focus areas for children and youth in the next three years includes the implementation of an early intervention package for vulnerable children and families (as discussed previously) and the strengthening of care and protection services. The early intervention package includes things like the expansion of Family Start, new funding for child advocates, increases in childcare assistance, and rises in family income levels through the Working for Families Package and so on. Some initiatives also target young people (rather than children), examples include Youth Transitions Pilots (to help youth access work/education/training) and the provision of Step-Up scholarships.

Activities that MSD are involved in to strengthen the care and protection sector include leading the new *Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families*, working with education providers to improve the quality of social work training and supporting CYF in implementing the new Differential Responses Model.

One of the most significant pieces of work that MSD is involved in is the recently developed *NGO Family Support Services Workforce Programme for Action*. A discussion paper is likely to be circulated to NGOs for comment in October. The aim of the *Workforce Programme for Action* is to take the necessary steps to ensure there are sufficient appropriately skilled NGO workers delivering effective family support services in the future.<sup>53</sup> This is in response to the known shortage of qualified social workers that affects both the statutory and NGO sector. NZCCSS will work with officials within MSD to circulate this discussion document among our members, once it is available.

#### **4.7.4 Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector**

The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS)<sup>54</sup> within MSD is also carrying out research on what resources are available to NGOs and what the resource gaps are. A stock-take list of resources available to NGOs should be available shortly. Research with fifty NGOs undertaken by OCVS in July this year identified that the key resource gaps are in the areas of governance, information technology, human resources and financial management. It is unclear what OCVS will do with this information in the short-term given that they have no dedicated budget for new capacity building projects.

#### **4.7.5 Family and Community Services (FACS)**

Family and Community Services, often known by its acronym 'FACS' is an operational division within MSD. FACS was established on 1 July 2004 and its objective is "to lead government and non-government organisations to work collaboratively to strengthen family support services and make them more effective

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<sup>53</sup> Appendix A: NGO Family Support Services' Workforce Programme for Action' supplied by MSD Official.

<sup>54</sup> Capacity Building in the Community Sector: Project Progress Report, July 2005, OCVS



for families”<sup>55</sup>. FACS was established to meet the leadership and coordination gap in family services identified in the CYF First Principles Baseline Review.<sup>56</sup>

The functions of FACS include strategy development, improving information about and access to services (online National Directory), leading services planning (Local Services Mapping and Heartland Services) and coordinating and leading programmes (including family violence programmes). FACS is also responsible for the administration of some family support programmes that were transferred from CYF as a result of a recommendation in the CYF First Principles Baseline Review that CYF needed to concentrate on its core services.

It is important to understand why FACS was established and what it seeks to do, as its functions relate to strengthening preventative services, the part of the services continuum where most NZCCSS members operate. According to correspondence to NZCCSS from our representative on the Family Services National Advisory Committee (FSNAC) of 1 June 2004, the new unit [FACS] was established to ‘take the pressure off CYF by strengthening family services delivery, provide a more preventative focus to family support services and to strengthen the family services sector’.<sup>57</sup>

#### **4.7.6 Family Services National Advisory Council (FSNAC)**

FSNAC was established in December 2003 to support the work of FACS. Its members include representation from government, NGOs, Iwi/Maori and Pacific peoples.<sup>58</sup> The central tasks for FSNAC include developing a Family Strategy, aligning the Family Strategy with other initiatives such as Strengthening Families and to provide a forum for information sharing. The development of a Family Strategy was by far the most challenging task. Its aim is to “provide a common framework to guide all work around supporting families and children”.<sup>59</sup>

During the period August to November 2004 FSNAC commissioned three reports from Synergia, namely, Families Outcomes Hierarchy (August 2004)<sup>60</sup>, Families Strategic Framework Intervention Logic (October 2004) and the Families Strategic Framework and Priorities (November 2004). All three reports contribute to the development of the Family Strategy.

If you have not heard about these reports, you are not alone. They have not been widely circulated and at this stage could not be said to reflect the views of NGO sector. A discussion document is being prepared which will “set out the thinking to date on the strategic framework for families – a common vision, set of principles and priorities for all agencies to work towards”.<sup>61</sup> NZCCSS will alert members when this FSNAC discussion document is ready.

FSNAC is currently reviewing its role and is considering expanding its brief to include the monitoring of family policy across government departments. It will also be examining how to strengthen its connections with other groups across the sector so it can be more representative.

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<sup>55</sup> [www.msd.govt.nz/about-us/index.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-us/index.html)

<sup>56</sup> MSD presentation on Family Services - Overheads

<sup>57</sup> This is reiterated in FACS’ first Family Services Information Sheet where they state “By focussing on prevention and early intervention, Family and Community Services seek to reduce the number of families who are vulnerable and require care and protection support”.

<sup>58</sup> A member of the Child and Family Policy Group of NZCCSS is a member of FSNAC.

<sup>59</sup> FSNAC update in New Dialogue 10 February 2005:4

<sup>60</sup> Can be viewed at [www.familyservices.govt.nz](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz) under publications

<sup>61</sup> Article on FSNAC in Plunket Intouch, June 2005:8

It is encouraging to hear that much of the work done by FSNAC to develop an overarching strategy and vision for families has been adopted by MSD, for example, in their Early Intervention Project.

#### **4.8 Families Commission**

The Families Commission was established under the Families Commission Act 2003 and began operating on 1 July the following year. The vision of the Families Commission is “Advocating best outcomes for families”<sup>62</sup>. The Commission achieves this outcome through maintaining community networks, evidence based research and advice, critique of family policies and through stimulated public debate on issues facing families. Some key issues that the Commission will be examining in the next 3 years include parenting support for families experiencing change, reducing family violence, poverty alleviation, supporting older people in families and strengthening Maori and Pacific development.<sup>63</sup>

#### **4.9 Office of the Children’s Commission**

The position of Children’s Commissioner operates under two pieces of legislation, the Children’s Commissioner Act 2003 and the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (1989). Similar to the Families Commission, the Children’s Commission has an advocacy role. “The Children’s Commissioner speaks out on behalf of all children to ensure their rights are respected and upheld”.<sup>64</sup> Good outcomes for children are sought through similar means to the Families Commission – a combination of community linkages, research, monitoring and advocacy. Unique to the Children’s Commissioner’s role, is the power under the Children’s Commissioner Act 2003 to carry out investigations into the actions within CYF that impact on children or young people.

### **5.0 OVERVIEW OF ISSUES – KEY THEMES ACROSS THE SERVICE CONTINUUM**

#### **5.1 Workforce Capacity**

It has become clear that a shortage of skilled workers is a priority concern for government across a number of disciplines including education, social work, health and youth development. In order to address these concerns departments have developed workforce capacity strategies specific to their field. Some of the current strategies include:

- NGO Family Support Services Programme of Action (still in development by MSD)
- CYF Workforce Capacity Development Strategy (Martin Jenkins & Associates)
- Care and Protection Workforce Development: A Report from the Workforce Development Group, Action Area 8, Care and Protection Blueprint, April 2004 ([www.msd.govt.nz/publications/sector-policy/care-protection-workforce-development.pdf](http://www.msd.govt.nz/publications/sector-policy/care-protection-workforce-development.pdf))
- Youth development workers scoping work by the Ministry of Youth Development (in preliminary stages)
- Mental Health Workforce Development Programme (launched in 2003) ([www.mhwd.govt.nz](http://www.mhwd.govt.nz))

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<sup>62</sup> Giving New Zealand Families a Voice: Families Commission Statement of Intent 2005/06

<sup>63</sup> Chief Commissioners overview - Ibid

<sup>64</sup> [www.occ.org.nz](http://www.occ.org.nz)

- National Non-Government Organisations (NGO) Mental Health & Addictions Workforce Development Plan Draft Discussion Document 2006-2009<sup>65</sup> (<http://www.in-site.co.nz/blueprint/links/objects/ConsultationAppendix.pdf>)

## **5.2 Workforce Capacity and NGOs**

The Child Abuse Protection Services (CAPS) have also recently completed a two-year project funded by CYF looking at the capacity of NGOs who work in the area of child protection. The findings reveal that many NGO staff are highly qualified, high quality training is available and supervision is high but there remain gaps in services in specific areas including access to mental health services, disability services for children and services tailored for young people. Adequate levels of funding remains a critical issue for NGOs.<sup>66</sup>

Workforce capacity plans tend to follow a similar structure, and activities fall within headings such as infrastructure, organisational development, retention and recruitment, training and development and research and evaluation. Of particular interest to NZCCSS members, is the work being led by MSD on how to ensure there are enough competent NGO staff to deliver family support services, the evolving work in MYD on building capacity for community based youth workers and the NGO workforce development plan recently drafted to address skills gaps in the community based mental health field.

## **5.3 Workforce Capacity and the Differential Response Model**

It is imperative for government to lift the capacity and capability of NGOs given the move to introduce a differential response, that is, the new option to refer care and protection notifications to NGOs for assistance if the preliminary assessment by CYF indicates that a full care and protection investigation is not warranted. Once an amendment to the New Zealand Children Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 is through parliament, CYF will be able to use NGOs that they have approved to carry out child and family assessments. New Zealand's focus on the NGO sector to help address care and protection workforce issues is far from unique and is in line with international trends.<sup>67</sup>

## **5.4 Information Sharing**

Most strategies have recognised the need to keep the key agencies, including NGOs, well informed. Some positive moves have been made to collect and share best practice (for example the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse), to improve planning (Local Service Mapping), to make it easier to find the right service (MSD's online National Directory) and to better direct funding (Family Violence Funding Circuit Breaker). Another example is the Interagency Information Sharing Guidelines developed by CYF for organisations involved in the care and protection of children.

## **5.5 Better Inter-Agency Collaboration and Coordination**

Policies almost always identify poor coordination as a barrier to working effectively, and the care and protection sector has been no exception. Improving coordination was a key goal in the Care and Protection Blueprint (2003) and remains a priority area in the Te Rito Strategy. Unfortunately both strategies were developed separately despite areas of commonality. It was not surprising then, that there were duplications in activities and some elements of the Blueprint were then absorbed into the Te Rito work-plan.

<sup>65</sup> This is one of thirty initiatives that are part of the New Zealand Mental Health Workforce Development Programme.

<sup>66</sup> A summary of findings is outlined in Te Rito News, Issue 2, Aug/Sept 2005:10 or ring Janet Bagshaw at CAPS national office on 04 801 2704.

<sup>67</sup> Roles, Competencies and Capacity of the Non-Government Social Service Workforce supporting Vulnerable Children, Young People and their Families: A Literature (Draft), Jill Worall, July 2005

With increasing numbers of public servants working on issues related to children and families, and with the expansion of existing programmes, growing numbers of pilot programmes, new ministerial teams and taskforces, it is difficult to see how the government will manage to overcome continuing problems of fragmentation.

It should be acknowledged however, that the Government does want to engage with the NGO sector and is frequently seeking feedback on discussion documents. How much credence is given to the feedback they receive is difficult to gauge.

## **5.6 Working Together**

It is frequently acknowledged by government in policy documents that the solutions to social problems cannot be addressed by government alone, as is reflected in the following quote by the Human Rights Commission:

*The [Human Rights] Action Plan recognises that while government has specific responsibilities for the promotion and protection of human rights, responsibilities extend beyond the State to regional and local government, to the business and community sectors, to voluntary groups and organisations.*<sup>68</sup>

In the care and protection sector, the contribution of NGOs is also widely acknowledged as significant. The Care and Protection Blueprint (2003) was the result of a recommendation by former Principal Youth Court Judge Mike Brown, in his well-known 2000 Ministerial Review, for government and NGOs to get together and draw up a map or blueprint of how to improve care and protection services for children.<sup>69</sup>

The move by CYF to introduce a Differential Responses Model reflects a formalisation through legislation of the integral contribution that NGOs make to protecting children from harm or neglect.

## **5.7 Changing Roles**

In order for a sector to perform well, it is essential that the key agencies and organisations are clear about their roles. Much thought has gone into clarifying roles at a policy level in the care and protection sector. Both the Brown Ministerial Review and the CYF Baseline Review looked into defining what CYF should be doing and what is best done by other agencies. Some changes include the moving of more general family support service type contracts from CYF to MSD, the establishment of FACS to lead work on strengthening family support services, and the narrowing of the focus of CYF to their core service.

The exact nature of the role of NGOs in the care and protection sector is less easily defined. What is clear from research by CYF on NGO's experiences in the Demand Management Strategy (DMS) work, is that NGOs are adamant that they do not want any changes in their services (via DMS or DRM) to affect their relationships with families, or to detract from their separate and distinct identity.<sup>70</sup>

## **5.8 Contracting and Compliance Costs**

A key issue for NGOs is the compliance costs associated with contracts. This issue is particularly important in the current environment because government is offering NGOs new roles and responsibilities. Treasury has produced guidelines for

<sup>68</sup> Mihi/Foreword, New Zealand Human Rights Action Plan: Priorities for Action, 2005-2010

<sup>69</sup> Foreword, Care and Protection Blueprint 2003

<sup>70</sup> Demand Management Strategy Review – Emerging Themes From Provider Interviews, DRM Project Team, 21 July 2005

government on contracting with NGOs and explicitly states that the right balance must be struck “between providing certainty as to what is being provided...while avoiding unreasonable compliance costs.”<sup>71</sup>

But few policies scanned for this report provided concrete ways to improve contract planning, coordination and compliance processes. It appears that in areas where government is increasing investment, compliance costs are also rising, for example, in the early childhood education sector. Steps have been taken by MSD to assist with regional planning of services through Local Services Mapping (LSM), and through the Te Rito Strategy to improve the provision of family violence services via their Family Violence Funding Circuit Breaker (FVFCB) project. Both LSM and the FVFCB are relatively new and it is too early to assess how effective they are.

In an effort to reduce compliance costs for social services that contract with multiple agencies MSD and Te Puni Kokiri are piloting a three-year Funding for Outcomes project (due to be completed in August 2006). Pilot sites have a single contract with multiple government departments to deliver a range of services. Single integrated contracts sound great in theory but are notoriously hard to do well. It remains to be seen how successful the Funding for Outcomes pilots will be.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The aim of this report is to give readers an overview of the overall direction of government policy pertaining to services for children and families, with particular emphasis on care and protection.

In an earlier report NZCCSS identified the components essential to an effective system to support children and families. To recap, these include the range of services (from general support to crisis intervention), a diversity of government agencies and NGOs, professional relationships, adequate resources in terms of money and people and the delivery of right kind of services at the right time.

Many of the policies scanned contained similar objectives and related to specific components in the family support system. The key question then is:

*What parts of the system are being adequately addressed through active policy (that is, policies that are being operationalised), and what parts of the system need further attention?*

To answer this question, we need to look at each part of the system separately.

### **6.1 Range of Services**

This refers to the continuum of services. It is evident from the policies included in this scan, and from Budget announcements in 2004 and 2005, that the emphasis for new investment is focussed on the early intervention part of the continuum. Some funding, although to a lesser degree, is also being channelled into supporting the transition from school into training or employment. It is more difficult to determine what money is being directed to the middle of continuum, that is to preventative services, because this has not been articulated as a priority for government.

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<sup>71</sup> Guidelines for Contracting with Non Government Organisations for Services Sought by the Crown, Treasury.

## **6.2 Diversity of Organisations**

To use a well-known adage, it takes a whole community to raise a child. It is widely acknowledged throughout policy that a significant and sustained resolution to social problems can only be achieved if there is a cooperative response from a whole host of people; in government, the NGO community and society. This is far easier to say than do however.

## **6.3 Professional Relationships**

In very simple terms prerequisites for respectful professional working relationships include: a shared understanding of what is trying to be achieved, a clear understanding of each others roles and responsibilities (and limitations) and a working environment favourable to 'getting on with the job'. If professional relationships are strained or hostile, the intervention - no matter how well resourced or targeted - is unlikely to work (or even be delivered) particularly for children and families with complex problems.

It would be neither fair nor accurate to say categorically that the government 'has' or 'has not' done this well. The answer falls somewhere in-between. The Family Services National Advisory Committee has produced three documents working towards a strategic framework for families<sup>72</sup> (a family strategy) however this has not been widely consulted on so could not be said to articulate a 'shared vision for families' at this stage. When it comes to clearer definitions of roles, the recommendations from the CYF Baseline Review on clarifying roles has contributed to making the roles of CYF and MSD clearer, if not the role of NGOs.

Is the working environment conducive to getting on with the job? In a rapidly growing and changing sector, with insufficient people with the right skills to meet the level of demand, and without surety of income (for NGOs at least), and minimal if any reduction in compliance costs, it appears that there is quite a lot of work still to do in this area.

## **6.4 Adequate Resources in Terms of Money and People**

As alluded to above, and as discussed in section 5.1, suitably qualified people, especially social workers, are in scarce supply and the situation if left unaddressed is likely to get worse. Government has responded with specific strategies to address workforce issues. Anecdotal evidence suggests that NGOs are feeling slightly better resourced than previously and in some areas (like early intervention) considerable new resources have been channelled. CYF has received substantial increases in resources and through a range of initiatives has managed to reduce unallocated cases significantly. Overall, there are signs of improvement but there is much work still to do.

## **6.5 Delivery of the Right Kind of Services at the Right Time**

This is a goal that all government agencies and NGOs should be striving for and can only be judged on the known best practice information available at the time. The New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House is a good example of a project that seeks to systematically collect, and make available, information on what works effectively for family violence prevention. It is encouraging to see government consolidating the knowledge base in this area and making it accessible to all. Lets hope the trend extends to other areas shortly.

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<sup>72</sup> These three documents are: Families Outcomes Hierarchy (August 2004), Families Strategic Framework Intervention Logic (October 2004) and Families Strategic Framework and Priorities (November 2004).

Government's investment in early intervention programmes targeted to vulnerable families is based on an idea that a 'sure start' will circumvent the high cost trajectory to later social problems. Many early intervention programmes are an expansion of pilots that have received positive evaluations, and are therefore grounded in information on effective practice. The move to focus on outcomes (the actual impact of an intervention) rather than the output (for example, the completion of an FGC) is also encouraging. As mentioned earlier, it is concerning that little attention appears to be given to the huge amount of work that fits into the middle of the services continuum, the preventative work that many of NZCCSS members are involved in on a daily basis. However, to strengthen family services with a preventative focus is the drive behind the relatively new Family and Community Services unit (FACS) within MSD. It will be worth monitoring the on-going impact of FACS initiatives in achieving its objectives.

## **6.6 Summary of Status of the Effective System to Support Children and Families**

Regarding our earlier discussed model of 'an effective system to support children and families' there appears to be the right ingredients – a wide range of services and a wide range of agencies and organisations involved, if not necessarily, the right quantities/qualities to make the perfect cake.

The workforce capacity work being instigated by government is essential and is worth being aware of. Addressing shortages in skilled people will take time and will be a resource intensive process.

Further work needs to be done on creating an environment that promotes good working relationships between government and NGOs, particularly in the areas of contracting and compliance costs, and the clarification of roles and responsibilities under DRM.

Securing adequate resources is likely to always be an issue, but there are signs that in a buoyant economy, there are some winners if your service fits within government priorities.

Are we working with people, in the right way, at the optimal time? Ultimately the only true indicator of whether progress is being made in this area is if there are fewer families in need of support. A genuine effort is being made by government to identify what constitutes effective practice and to share it with all interested parties.

The fog is starting to clear and overall there is room for optimism.

## Appendix 1

### Issues for On-Going Monitoring

1. Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families and the new Ministerial Team
2. Review of Demand Management Strategy by CYF.
3. Implementation of the Differential Responses Model including the progress of the CYF Amendment Bill (No.4)
4. Progress of the Repeal of Section 59
5. Review of Community Funding by CYF due 30 June 2006
6. Review of Family Group Conference process by CYF and the FGC Conference planned for November 2006
7. Completion of Phase II of the CYF Youth Justice Capacity Review in October 2005
8. MSD Family Support Workforce Programme of Action
9. MYD paper to government outlining the progress of relevant agencies in implementing the UNCROC work programme, expected to be considered before Christmas 2005.
10. Implementation of the Working for Families package, particularly the implications for non working families when the Special Benefit is replaced with the Temporary Additional Support benefit.
11. The action plan which outlines how the government plans to implement Te Tahu Mental Health Strategy, due to Cabinet by March 2006.
12. The Youth Offending Services Effectiveness Checklist (YOSEC) due for release in early 2006.
13. Implementation plans for the New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights due to Government in November 2005-09-08
14. Review of youth programmes by the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD)
15. Revamping of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa by MYD
16. Development work being undertaken by MYD on youth worker workforce development.
17. Progress of the Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector in their NGO Capacity Building project
18. Developments with FSNAC and the proposed discussion paper on a Families Strategy
19. Progress by MSD in implementing their Early Intervention Project
20. The finalisation of the National NGO Mental Health and Addictions Workforce Development Plan.
21. Care and protection work generated by the reformed Care and Protection Expert Advisory Group
22. Developments in contracting and compliance processes between government and NGOs.



## **Overview**

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) represents six denominations: the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterian social services agencies, as well as the Methodist and the Salvation Army churches.

Collectively, these six members are responsible for around 500 social service delivery sites in their networks throughout New Zealand.

Our members deliver a wide range of services that cover such areas as child and family services, services for older people, foodbank and emergency services, housing, budgeting, disability, addictions, community development and employment services.

This size and diversity in services are amongst the many reasons for NZCCSS to celebrate its membership and the work that they do to meet people's needs throughout New Zealand.

## **NZCCSS Mission and Role**

NZCCSS works for a just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand. We see this as a continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ. In seeking to fulfil this mission, we are committed to:

- giving priority to the poor and vulnerable members of our society
- Te Tiriti O Waitangi

The key roles of NZCCSS are to represent the common interests and vision of our members at the national level; to supply information and networking opportunities to support members provide quality services; and to develop, critique and advocate for policies that will assist poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society.

A national Council, made up of two representatives from each denomination, governs NZCCSS.

A small Secretariat team carries out the day-to-day work of the Council. This includes gathering and distributing information, research on social policy issues, and building relationships with government officials and others working in the community sector.

A Policy Group oversees the policy and research work that NZCCSS does in three key areas: child and family, housing and poverty and services for older people. Each Policy Group is made up of at least two council representatives plus social services managers, academics or others with particular expertise in that area. This means that the work that NZCCSS does is well informed by what is happening at the 'coal face'.

An example of NZCCSS' current work under the three main policy areas gives an indication of the work we do:

1. Housing and Poverty– including the Poverty Indicator Project that researched clients coming to foodbanks as the basis for developing a strategy to reduce the need for foodbanks in Aotearoa New Zealand.

2. Children and Families – including writing briefing papers for Christian social service providers to help them manage and be fully aware of the changes being introduced by government in relation to children at risk.
3. Services for Older People – including campaigning for improved funding in both residential and home-based care for older New Zealanders in order to protect people needing these services.

For further information about NZCCSS please contact Jeremy Irvine, Executive Officer:

Phone: (04) 473 2627  
Email: [admin@nzccss.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzccss.org.nz)  
Web: [www.nzccss.org.nz](http://www.nzccss.org.nz)