

Clearing the Fog: An Update of Policy

**FUTURE FIT:
CHRISTIAN FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES IN AOTEAROA
(STAGE 3)**

July 2006



NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICES

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NZCCSS – WHO WE ARE

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 over 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 NZCCSS does is well informed by what is happening in our members' communities.

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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. New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) members do this by providing a range of practical services that respond to needs in local communities. This report updates government policies related to children and families that were first outlined in the NZCCSS paper *Clearing the Fog: an Overview of Policy (Stage 1)* October 2005. It aims to provide a brief snapshot of the progress and status of policies outlined in *Clearing the Fog (Stage 1)*. It outlined government policies that “contributed towards creating an effective system to support children, young people and families.”¹ It will also highlight the significant changes that have happened since *Clearing the Fog (Stage 1)*, October 2005.

We begin with an outline of the merger between Child, Youth and Family (CYF) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The merger was announced on March 6 2006, and took effect on July 1 2006.² We then update recent changes to the benefit system through the Working for Families initiative and also the proposed changes under a new Single Core Benefit. Following this we look at key policies which were first outlined in the *Clearing the Fog (Stage 1)* report. The policies or initiatives are grouped under three headings; CYF, MSD and ‘other agencies’. We conclude by providing a snapshot of relevant recent legislation, including the *Young Offenders (Serious Crimes) Bill*.

Findings: progress within initiatives and policy since *Clearing the Fog* was published in October 2005

Child Youth and Family (CYF):

- Implementing a **Differential Response Model (DRM)** is a core aim of CYF. DRM is expected to be introduced throughout the country in 2007.³
- CYF want to achieve more **permanent and stable living arrangements** for children and young people. They have put together guidelines around permanency for children in care and are in the process of implementing the guidelines known as the ‘permanency policy’.
- CYF have carried out a review of the **Demand Management Strategy (DMS)**. The review was carried out to capture the lessons and experiences that CYF and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) gained while involved in DMS. Feedback about the experience of DMS has been important for CYF to identify the best way to develop partnerships within the wider care and protection community.

Ministry of Social Development (MSD):

- As part of the Government’s **Working for Families** Package there have been changes to people’s entitlement to benefits from April 1 2006. Income thresholds for receiving Family Support, Child Tax Credit and Parental Tax Credit have increased; thresholds for receiving the Family Tax Credit have also increased.

¹ *Clearing the Fog: An Overview of Policy* NZCCSS, October 2005.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The Child Tax Credit has now been replaced by the In-Work Payment and the Special Benefit replaced by Temporary Additional Support (TAS).

- **A Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families** has been formed under Te Rito, the New Zealand Family Violence Strategy. The Taskforce has established a team to focus on the goal of changing attitudes and behaviours towards family violence. MSD and the Families Commission are jointly funding a research project focused on understanding the motivations, attitudes and behaviours of the perpetrators of partner violence.
- The **Youth Workers Workforce Development Project** is aimed at addressing workforce issues facing youth workers. There have been a number of steps to identify what the issues in the youth work sector are. The project is seeking to address a number of issues including: involvement in local youth worker networks / collectives, professional supervision for youth workers, professional development for youth workers, study awards for youth work qualifications, and a code of ethics for youth workers.⁴
- Maori and Pacific members of the **Family Services National Advisory Council** (FSNAC) have recently been revisiting the moemoea (dream/vision) of FSNAC. The moemoea will be incorporated into the Family and Community Services (FACS) vision. FSNAC is looking at ways to effectively promote the moemoea. The focus of FSNAC at present is a holistic 'family centric' approach. FSNAC have agreed on the current focus areas which are the early years (from antenatal up to five years) and family violence.⁵
- The Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) provides an annual update to Cabinet detailing the government's progress on the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** (UNCROC) Five-Year Work Programme 2004-2008. This year's report back has been deferred from June 2006 until November 2006 so that it can incorporate issues raised at an UNCROC forum in August.⁶
- The Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) and FACS have been jointly working on a **NGO Capacity Building** project. They released a summary report in December 2005 entitled *Building Organisational Capacity in the Community and Voluntary Sector: A Summary Report on Needs and Opportunities (October 2005)*.

⁴ Information provided by a Ministry of Youth Development official in telephone correspondence May 22 2006.

⁵ 'Dream or Dreaming? A Moemoea for families,' Family Services National Advisory Council' Power-point presentation, September 2005.

⁶ Information provided by a Ministry of Youth Development official in email correspondence July 11 2006.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There are days when it seems that there is little point in trying to resist the irresistible. There are also days when you kick the ball to try to reach clarity and it falls well short of the goal. It's a difficult day when those two intersect.

Clearing the Fog is a project that has attempted to get to the bottom of what is happening in policy development terms in the child, youth and family sector.

Sitting where we sit at NZCCSS this is one of the most important 'games' in town. Our mission to be concerned about poor and vulnerable people means that we are vitally concerned about what happens to children, young people and the families that they are a part of.

We actively seek to influence the development and implementation of policies that protect them and promote their well being.

Policy development in a democratic society is, by its very nature, a complex thing. There are protocols, rules, established procedures and the 'machinery of government'. There are the big players, the up and comers, the establishment and those seeking to move things in a new direction. Policy development is not for the faint hearted or the uninformed.

The tragedy, however, is that the needs of the most affected can easily be forgotten in the policy development game that can ensue.

Clearing the Fog has been an attempt by NZCCSS to explain in an accessible way what is happening in the policy development game.

Who is proposing to do what about the issues we face, where they are up to and when we can expect to see some results.

Our staff have worked hard to gather information, to trace where initiatives are up to and to describe what it is that they are seeing.

NZCCSS has fallen short of the goal of providing clarity. To be fair we had as much chance of accurately and coherently describing what was going on as the TV commentators at the recent Super 14 final.

The irresistible conclusion is that it suits someone, somewhere, to have the fog that shrouds what appears to us to be an underwhelming performance. It's an irresistible conclusion but resist it we must.

To settle on that conclusion would be to admit defeat and assume that no-one who reads this report will care enough to do something about the situation, that the agencies that contribute to this sector, at either policy formation or grass roots service, do not care enough to say that what we see in front of us – the grey nothingness – is an acceptable way to care for the poor and vulnerable of our society.

Please read this report. It provides information that will help you find your way in the 'pea soup' of government's response to families.

2.0 MERGER OF CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY AND MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

On March 6 2006 the Government announced that CYF would be merged with MSD.⁷ The resignation of the CYF Chief Executive in October 2005 had prompted the State Services Commission to re-evaluate management options for CYF.⁸ The Minister for Social Development and Employment David Benson-Pope said the merger was to “bring all the levers together around CYFs – policy, services, other social agencies – and back them with MSD’s organisation and support.” The merger took effect on July 1 2006.⁹

After the announcement the State Services Commission (SSC) released a Cabinet paper that outlined a number of “management initiatives” to improve the delivery of services within CYF. SSC concluded that the most significant issues facing CYF were a lack of a system-wide approach to managing the business process; poor management and performance information; weak youth justice capability and insufficient policy co-ordination.¹⁰

The proposed structure after the merger

In May 2006 a proposal was released by the Chief Executive of CYF that outlined how CYF and MSD would be structured post-merger.¹¹

- CYF becoming a ‘service line’ of MSD as, for example, Work and Income is, with a Deputy Chief Executive to manage CYF.
- The role and function of the Chief Social Worker expanding allowing “professional leadership across MSD”¹², with the Chief Social Worker reporting directly to the Chief Executive of MSD.
- Bringing Family and Community Services (FACS) and CYF closer together to better manage demand for care and protection and youth justice services.
- CYF policy advice being placed within MSD.

NZCCSS comments

- The merging of CYF and MSD creates challenges – but also opportunities for good, practical policies and services that support the needs of children and families.
- Creating a wider role for the Chief Social Worker within MSD is a positive step.
- The argument outlined in the SSC Cabinet paper noting the resignation of the then CYF CEO as a reason for merging the two agencies was, at best, creative.

⁷ ‘Child, Youth and Family Merge with Ministry of Social Development,’ Press Release, March 6 2006.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ ‘Machinery of government arrangements for the delivery of child, youth and family services’ - Office of the Minister of State Services. accessed at www.ssc.govt.nz

¹¹ ‘Improving Outcomes for our children, young people and families’.

¹² Ibid, p.2.

3.0 RECENT CHANGES TO THE BENEFIT SYSTEM

3.1 The Working for Families package (WFF)

WFF was introduced in the 2004 Government Budget with the aim of improving the well-being of low to middle-income families through increases in income assistance, childcare assistance and accommodation assistance.¹³ Implementation began in October 2004 and continues until April 2007.¹⁴ The Prime Minister said an extension to the Working for Families package would mean 60,000 more families would be eligible for assistance from April 1 2006, and all up, 350,000 families were believed to be entitled to family tax relief in 2006.¹⁵

3.1.1 Changes from April 1 2006:

- Income thresholds for receiving Family Support, Child Tax Credit and Parental Tax Credit will increase.
- The thresholds for receiving the Family Tax Credit will increase from \$15,080 (before tax) to \$17,680 (before tax)¹⁶.
- The Child Tax Credit was replaced by the In-Work Payment.
- The Special Benefit was replaced by Temporary Additional Support (TAS) (see below for definitions of these entitlements).

3.1.2 Four forms of Family Assistance

Four forms of family assistance, whose criteria have changed as a result of WFF, are outlined below.

Family Support:

This is a targeted payment to families to provide long-term help with day-to-day living costs. The amount you receive depends on how much you earn, the number of children you have and ages of your children. Weekly payments can be up to \$85 if the eldest child is 16, 17 or 18 years old, the maximum for other dependant children is \$72.¹⁷ Work and Income pays Family Support when your family's main source of income is a benefit. Inland Revenue Department (IRD) pays Family Support when work is your main source of income.¹⁸

Child Tax Credit (CTC) and In-Work Payment (IWP)

CTC is a per-child payment for families with dependant children who are not receiving a benefit.¹⁹ The payment is based on the number of dependant children 18 years and under which you have in your family. If you were receiving the CTC before April 1 2006 and are now no longer eligible under the new In-Work Payment you will continue to receive the CTC.²⁰

As noted earlier, the IWP replaced the CTC from April 1 2006. The IWP can be up to \$60 a week per family with three children and \$15 a week for each other child.²¹ To qualify, you must be in paid work and receive a salary, a wage or be self employed.²² Regular work hours are required, sole parents are required to normally work at least 20 hours a week and two-parent families are required to work 30 hours a week

¹³ 'Budget 2004' Hon. Steve Maharey, Minister of Social Development and Employment, May 27 2004.

¹⁴ 'Working for Families: Fact sheet 4,' Ministry of Social Development, accessed March 3 2006.

¹⁵ 'Prime Minister's Statement to Parliament' Rt. Hon Helen Clark, 14 February 2006.

¹⁶ Information provided by the Ministry of Social Development, July 21, 2006.

¹⁷ Information provided by a staff member of the Wellington People's Centre in email correspondence April 19 2006.

¹⁸ 'Working for Families' Work and Income, www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz.

¹⁹ This includes New Zealand Superannuation, the Veterans Pension, Accident Compensation or student allowances.

²⁰ Information provided by a staff member of the Wellington People's Centre in email correspondence April 19 2006.

²¹ 'Working for Families' Work and Income, www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz.

²² 'Family Assistance' Inland Revenue Department, www.ird.govt.nz/familyassistance/intro/.

between them. Your family are not eligible if you receive an income-tested benefit or student allowance.²³

Family Tax Credit

The Family Tax Credit is only available for families who are not receiving any benefit. Families who earn up to \$18,368 (before tax) are entitled to a credit which is paid by IRD. Like the In-Work Payment, sole parents must work 20 hours a week and two-parent families must work 30 hours a week between them to qualify.²⁴

Parental Tax Credit

The Parental Tax Credit is only available for families who are not receiving any benefit. If you receive Paid Parental Leave then you are not eligible for the Parental Tax Credit. The entitlement depends on your family income and the type of income you received in the first eight weeks after your child was born.²⁵ Payments are provided for the first eight weeks after your child is born, they are income-tested and can be up to \$1,200. If you register with IRD within the first three months of the birth of the child, payments are paid fortnightly. If you register after three months they are paid a lump sum at the end of the tax year, which normally means you receive the money in June.²⁶

3.1.3 Extra assistance: the Special Benefit and Temporary Additional Support Special Benefit

The Special Benefit is paid weekly and is given to you if you need extra help in meeting essential costs. To be eligible your income must be lower than your essential costs. Subject to discretion, weekly rates are usually capped at 25% of allowable costs if you have dependant children and 30% of allowable costs if you do not have dependant children. The payment can be higher than the capped amount if you have good reason (for example, high disability costs). The Special Benefit allows some discretion, so the amount may go up or down depending on your circumstances.²⁷

The asset limits for Special Benefit at 1 April 2006 are:

Family circumstances Asset limit: Single \$869.81.

Married or civil union couple (with or without children) and Sole parents: \$1,449.34.

TAS

If you were receiving the Special Benefit before April 1 2006 you will continue to receive the Special Benefit. Under existing rules and entitlements until the client no longer qualifies for that assistance. No person receiving a Special Benefit at 1 April 2006 will be transferred to TAS, and the grand parenting rules for Special Benefit ensure that no person will experience a reduction in their benefit as a result of the introduction of TAS.

Changes under the new TAS are;

- Maximum time limit for payments is 13 weeks, after this time you must reapply.
- Discretion that was allowed under the Special Benefit will not be allowed - unless it is staff discretion to decline your application or requested costs. This would only happen with good reason (e.g. if a person refused to verify their costs, take reasonable steps to reduce their financial hardship, or is suspected of abusing the provisions).

²³ 'Family Assistance' Inland Revenue Department, www.ird.govt.nz/familyassistance/intro/ .

²⁴ 'Working for Families' Work and Income, www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz .

²⁵ 'Working for Families' Work and Income, www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz .

²⁶ 'Family Assistance' Inland Revenue Department, www.ird.govt.nz/familyassistance/intro/ .

²⁷ Information provided by the Ministry of Social Development, July 21, 2006.

- There is a fixed list of what is defined as allowable costs; the amount for some of these allowable costs will have a weekly cap.
- The maximum weekly rate for TAS is usually the lesser of an applicants assessed deficiency or 30% of their unabated main benefit (or UB equivalent for non-beneficiaries). However, people who reach this upper limit but who have unmet disability costs can receive an additional payment of 30% of the difference between the applicant's disability allowance and their unmet disability costs.²⁸

There is an accommodation loading that requires people to meet the first \$20.69 of their accommodation costs from their regular income before these costs can be included in an assessment for TAS.

Working for Families: Changes from April 1 2006:

- Income thresholds for receiving Family Support, Child Tax Credit and Parental Tax Credit will increase.
- The thresholds for receiving the Family Tax Credit will increase from \$18,368 (before tax) to \$21,658 (before tax)²⁹.
- The Child Tax Credit was replaced by the In-Work Payment.
- The Special Benefit was replaced by Temporary Additional Support (TAS) (see below for definitions of these entitlements).

Benefits which have changed as a result of Working for Families:

- Family Support.
- Family Tax Credit.
- Parental Tax Credit.
- Special Benefit (on 1 April 2006 replaced by Temporary Additional Support for all new applicants).
- Child Tax Credit (on 1 April 2006 replaced by the In-Work Payment for all new applicants).

3.1.4 Working For Families: what it means for vulnerable children and families

WFF has been criticised by groups such as the Public Health Association,³⁰ Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)³¹ and the Wellington People's Centre³² who believe the WFF package leaves out the poorest and most vulnerable children and families.

CPAG believe the IWP should be changed to "a simple increase in Family Support of \$20 per child" and a flat rate for all low income earners.³³ In 2002 CPAG laid a complaint with the Human Rights Commission alleging discriminatory nature of the CTC (replaced by the IWP for new applicants). The complaint is before the Human Rights Review Tribunal.³⁴

The Wellington People's Centre released a report in late March 2006 which called the WFF package "the biggest benefit cut since 1991."³⁵ They criticised the benefit cuts to the Special Benefit and the CTC which they say will reduce entitlements for people on low incomes and beneficiaries, while people on annual incomes over \$30,000 will be entitled to an increase in assistance.³⁶ The CTC only requires that the parent not be "substantially dependant on the state."³⁷ This means they cannot

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ 'Family Assistance' Inland Revenue Department, www.ird.govt.nz/familyassistance/intro/.

³⁰ 'PHA Urges Government to get Serious about Child Poverty' Public Health Association of New Zealand, January 12 2006.

³¹ 'Child Poverty Action Group, Budget Submission.' February 2006.

³² Working for Families: The Biggest Benefit Cut Since 1991' Stephen Ruth, Wellington People's Centre, March 31 2006.

³³ Working for Families: The Biggest Benefit Cut Since 1991' Stephen Ruth, Wellington People's Centre, March 31 2006.

³⁴ 'Child Poverty Action Group, Budget Submission.' February 2006.

³⁵ Working for Families: The Biggest Benefit Cut Since 1991' Stephen Ruth, Wellington People's Centre, March 31 2006:1.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, p.5.

receive a main benefit, student allowance or ACC loss of earnings compensation for more than three months.³⁸

The report by the Wellington People's Centre estimates that the change of entitlement under TAS could affect over 50,000 beneficiaries and people on low incomes (once the provision was fully in force). The report claims the change will cut the entitlement of 30,000 beneficiaries who are eligible for the Special Benefit but are not receiving it.³⁹ The new eligibility requirements for TAS are also a concern to CPAG due to less flexibility or discretion as there previously had been with the Special Benefit.⁴⁰

3.1.5 Future changes

More families will be eligible for Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) childcare subsidies as a result of higher income thresholds from October 2006.⁴¹ From April 2007, the rate of Family Support will increase by \$10 per week per child for eligible families.⁴²

3.2 The Single Core Benefit

In February 2005 the Government announced a proposal to replace the Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit, Invalids Benefit, Domestic Purposes Benefit, and Widows Benefit with a Single Core Benefit.⁴³ The new Single Core Benefit would also affect the Independent Youth Benefit (IYB) and the Emergency Benefits.⁴⁴ The benefit would require applicants to apply for any added extra entitlements including the accommodation supplement, childcare assistance, hardship payments, and payments for people with disabilities.⁴⁵ Legislation for the Single Core Benefit is expected to be introduced by the end of 2006 followed by benefit implementation in 2007.⁴⁶

3.2.1 Why a Single Core Benefit?

The Government outlined its reasons for its decision to change to a Single Core Benefit in the February 2005 Cabinet paper *Extending Opportunities to Work*.⁴⁷ It notes that social assistance reform began when the social policy document *Pathways to Opportunity* was released in June 2001; and claimed there was a need to "rebuild the social security system."⁴⁸ The Cabinet paper outlines the Single Core Benefit as a necessary change due to the current system being "inherited from a past in which jobs were scarce." The [then] current low unemployment (3.8%) was one reason for the reform, as were the rising rates of people on sickness and invalids benefits being another.⁴⁹

The paper stated that a new system would ensure that more people, including those on the Sickness and Invalids Benefit move into paid employment and proposed the new benefit be based on two categories:

³⁸ Information provided by a staff member of the Wellington People's Centre in email correspondence April 19 2006.

³⁹ 'Working for Families: The Biggest Benefit Cut Since 1991' Stephen Ruth, Wellington People's Centre, March 31 2006:1.

⁴⁰ 'Child Poverty Action Group, Budget Submission.' February 2006.

⁴¹ 'Prime Minister Statement to Parliament' February 14 2006, www.beehive.govt.nz.

⁴² 'Working for Families' Work and Income, www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz.

⁴³ 'Simplified benefit system roll-out begins in May' Media release, Ministry of Social Development, February 22 2005.

⁴⁴ This includes the Emergency Maintenance Allowance for Single Parents on the DPB.

⁴⁵ 'Working towards a Single Core Benefit' Work and Income, www.workandincome.govt.nz.

⁴⁶ 'Launch of Work and Income's new service approach' April 27 2006, Hon David Benson-Pope.

⁴⁷ *Extending Opportunities to Work*, Office of the Minister of Social Development and Employment, February 2 2005.

⁴⁸ 'Pathways to Opportunity' Media Statement, Rt Hon Helen Clark, June 18 2001.

⁴⁹ *Extending Opportunities to Work*, Office of the Minister of Social Development and Employment, February 2 2005.

1. **“rapid return to full-time work.”**⁵⁰ This group will make up the majority of clients and will include people who are able to return to full time work as soon as possible, people who are temporarily unable to work or those who are undertaking work-focused training.
2. The second group will be the **“work, development and preparation”** group and will include people with caring responsibilities, ill health or disability.

The paper did point out that there will be a small group of people who have “severe impairments and conditions” and are not able to take part in employment focused activity.⁵¹

The changes to social assistance are expected to save \$20 million per year, rising to \$40-70 million per year (by conservative estimates).⁵²

Single Core Benefit timeframes

- June 2001: *'Pathways to Opportunity'* was released by the Government, claiming the need to “rebuild the social security system”⁵³.
- February 2005: Cabinet paper *Extending Opportunities to Work* outlines the proposal for a new Single Core Benefit.
- By the end of 2006, it is thought that legislation for the proposed benefit change will be introduced.
- The Single Core Benefit is expected to be implemented in 2007.

⁵⁰ Extending Opportunities to Work, Office of the Minister of Social Development and Employment, February 2 2005.

⁵¹ Extending Opportunities to Work, Office of the Minister of Social Development and Employment, February 2 2005.

⁵² Extending Opportunities to Work, Office of the Minister of Social Development and Employment, February 2 2005.

⁵³ 'Pathways to Opportunity' Media Statement, Rt Hon Helen Clark, June 18 2001.

4.0 CYF: A POLICY AND INITIATIVE UPDATE

4.1 Initiatives led by CYF

The *Clearing the Fog* report included the following work undertaken by CYF;

- CYF Statement of Intent 2005/06.
- CYF Workforce Capability Development Strategy, June 2004.
- First Principles Baseline Review, September 2003.
- Te Pounamu Manaaki Tamariki, Manaaki Whanau, December 2001.
- Care and Protection is about Adult Behaviour (Brown Report), December 2000.⁵⁴

4.2 CYF initiatives to be updated

The CYF strategic initiatives will be revisited to assess the progress made since late 2005 when *Clearing the Fog* was released. We also update the review of the Demand Management Strategy (DMS) that has recently been completed by CYF.

The CYF strategic initiatives that will be updated are:

- CYF Differential Response Model (DRM).
- Achieving permanency outcomes.
- Enhancing family decision-making mechanisms: review of the family group conference (FGC) process.
- Youth justice capability review.
- Demand Management Strategy (DMS).

• CYF's vision

CYF's vision is "safe children and young people in strong families and responsive communities: free from abuse, free from neglect and free from offending."⁵⁵

4.2.1 CYF Differential Response Model (DRM)

MSD is seeking to introduce new provisions to the *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act (CYPF Act)* 1989 to enable the full introduction of the Differential Response Model (DRM). The model is designed to facilitate the dual goals of child protection and family support by increasing CYF's focus on those children and young people who are at the highest risk of harm or insecurity of care and require statutory intervention while supporting the effective functioning of the social services sector.

The proposed amendments⁵⁶ allow CYF to undertake a preliminary assessment of notifications and then determine the most appropriate response from a menu of options.⁵⁷ The options include a Child and Family Assessment, which can be done by either CYF or approved agencies as an alternative to or in conjunction with an investigation by CYF⁵⁸ and referral for the provision of services, enabling some NGOs to have an earlier role in intervention with the children and their families.

⁵⁴ 'Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries', NZCCSS, October 2005.

⁵⁵ Child, Youth and Family, Statement of Intent 2005/06.

⁵⁶ *CYF Amendment Bill (Number 4)* this Bill is currently awaiting its second reading and will be read in 2006.

⁵⁷ Developing the Differential Response Model, www.cyf.govt.nz June 14 2005.

⁵⁸ Information provided by a Child, Youth and Family official in email correspondence April 23 2006.

Status as at October 2005:

When *Clearing the Fog* was published, the Government had invested \$2.1 million to the end of 2005/06 to test DRM.⁵⁹ CYF was due to begin testing the DRM in October 2005 and DRM was expected to be implemented from July 2006.⁶⁰

Current status:

The 2006/07 year is being used to test, evaluate and refine the DRM in the Taranaki and Royal Oak sites and at the call centre. Testing has commenced in the Taranaki and Royal Oak (Auckland) sites and the CYF Call Centre (for those notifications that relate to Taranaki and Royal Oak).

This testing process is the first stage of implementation. A real-time evaluation of the impact of the DRM is being built into the testing process to support a 'learning-by-doing' approach. Findings from the evaluation will be used to refine and develop the DRM prior to its introduction throughout the country.

Expansion of the DRM to other CYF sites is expected in 2007.⁶¹

DRM timeframes

- Testing components of the DRM commenced in October 2005.
- Full on site testing began in Taranaki, Royal Oak and the Call Centre on July 10 2006.
- Expansion of the DRM to other CYF sites is expected in 2007.

4.2.2 Achieving permanent living arrangements for children and young people

A CYF goal is to achieve permanent and stable living arrangements for children and young people in out-of-home care. There are four broad goals:

- Remain/return home
- Permanency with kin or whanau/family group, preferably under the Care of Children Act,
- Permanency with caregivers who are neither whanau nor family group, preferably under the Care of Children Act,
- Transition to independent living with suitable family-like support

Status as at October 2005:

In their Statement of Intent 2005/2006 CYF set out what they felt was needed to achieve their permanency goal for children and young people in out-of-home care.⁶²

Current Status:

CYF have now finished putting together guidelines around permanency for children in out-of-home care. In March this year they began implementing the guidelines known as the 'permanency policy'. They expect the guidelines to be in place in all of their sites by the end of April 2006.⁶³ The permanency guidelines provide CYF with a consistent framework to ensure that good practice is consistent across all their sites.⁶⁴ The new guidelines include a user's guide which is aimed at assisting staff with the change.

⁵⁹ 'Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries', NZCCSS, October 2005.

⁶⁰ 'Clearing the Fog: An Overview of Policy', NZCCSS, October 2005.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² CYF conditions for permanency are; the need to meet the child or young person's needs, the need for a planned return home, a permanent placement with extended family, a permanent placement with a new family, or a planned transition to independent living, the need for caregivers to assume legal responsibility for the child or young person, preferably under the Care of Children Act for those who are not parents and lastly for CYF to provide specific, ongoing financial and other support to meet the child or young person's needs and ensure the placement is sustainable.

⁶³ Information provided by a Child Youth and Family official in email correspondence April 13 2006.

⁶⁴ Information provided by a Child, Youth and Family official in email correspondence April 6 2006.

The five key elements of the policy are:

- a definition of permanency;
- a requirement that all children and young people have a permanency goal and concurrent plan;
- an expectation that legislation be used to secure and support permanency;
- an expectation that ongoing support is provided and;
- an expectation that support is specified in a court order⁶⁵.

Local teams are responsible for making sure the policy guidelines are in place. These teams will include a combination of a Practice Leader, Care Specialist and a CYF Lawyer.⁶⁶ The policy will be put in place across all four CYF regions and CYF will try to include all people affected by the new policy.⁶⁷ CYF are trying to monitor the impact the change will have on children and young people. In addition, they are closely monitoring the effect of the policy on children aged five and under and also on children who have been in care for six months or less.⁶⁸

4.2.3 Family Group Conferences (FGCs)

The FGC is a statutory decision-making process involving, child or young person, their family/whanau, CYF social worker and other relevant professionals. The purpose of FGCs are to enable families to be the primary decision makers for their children and young people, whether that is within a care and protection or youth justice context. Research activity in regard to how families make decisions and FGCs is currently in progress.

Status as at October 2005:

Research on the FGCs and how families make decisions was due to be undertaken over the coming eighteen months. The research would look at the impact on various people attending FGCs and the impact that this participation would have on achieving principles set out in the *Child, Young Persons and their Families Act*, for example, healing and reconciliation.⁶⁹

Current Status:

Research with regard to Maori and Pacific communities has been completed. A further research proposal is currently seeking ethics approval. An International Conference on family decision-making in statutory social work called '*Coming Home-Te Hokinga Mai*' will be hosted by CYF in conjunction with the Family Group Conference Network in November 2006.⁷⁰

4.2.4 Youth Justice Capacity Review

The Youth Justice Capacity Review was undertaken by CYF to determine what is required to improve the performance of the youth justice area within CYF.⁷¹

Status as at October 2005:

Clearing the Fog noted that the First Principles Baseline Review of CYF in 2003 made the recommendation to review the capability of supervisors and social workers who work in the area of youth justice. CYF began the review of youth justice – with the first stage of the review gathering information and identifying the issues that staff faced including skills, resources and variability in service provision across the

⁶⁵ Information provided by a Child Youth and Family official in email correspondence March 30 2006

⁶⁶ Information provided by a Child Youth and Family official in email correspondence April 21 2006.

⁶⁷ Information provided by a Child Youth and Family official in email correspondence March 30 2006.

⁶⁸ Information provided by a Child Youth and Family official in email correspondence April 13 2006.

⁶⁹ 'Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries' NZCCSS, October 2005.

⁷⁰ 'Awhi mai Awhi atu,' Child, Youth and Family newsletter, issue 9 May 2006.

⁷¹ 'Machinery of government arrangements for the delivery of child, youth and family services' Office of the Minister of State Services, Accessed at www.ssc.co.nz.

country. The second stage began in November 2005 and focused on how to address inconsistencies and issues that were identified in stage one.

Current status:

The second stage of the Youth Justice Capacity Review (discussed below) is now complete and has been approved by the Minister of Justice. The third stage will involve implementation of models and frameworks developed in the second stage. Stage three is expected to take 12 months, having begun in March 2006.⁷²

*Description of the second stage*⁷³

The second stage of the review of youth justice involved developing a number of models, frameworks and standards to improve the delivery of youth justice services. It also aims to clarify roles and responsibilities of front-line youth justice workers.

- CYF developed a Youth Justice Service Process Model (YJSPM) which visually maps CYF's role in the youth justice system. The YJSPM has been attached to CYF policies and procedures/templates so that staff can access relevant and up-to-date information that is easy to understand
- A clear set of quality practice standards has been developed by CYF, with the aim of improving the delivery of services in the youth justice area to provide clear guidelines for front-line workers in regards to their roles, responsibilities, what best practice looks like and how the legislation fits within their work. A youth 'justice practice framework' and an 'outcomes and intervention logic framework' has been developed, led by the Office of the Chief Social Worker.⁷⁴
- As part of the second stage CYF also undertook work on the costing and resources needed for a new delivery system. They looked at staffing levels and came up with what they felt were bottom line staffing levels.

The third and final stage

Front-line staff will be trained so that they understand what the new documentation means and how they can use it effectively.⁷⁵

What does a review of youth justice mean for youth justice workers?

Youth justice workers now have an easy-to-use guide; whereas previously there were no simple accessible frameworks, guidelines or models for them.

4.2.5 Demand Management Strategy (DMS)

DMS was developed in 2004 as a solution to addressing high demand on CYF.⁷⁶ Essentially, the DMS enabled NGOs to undertake some care and protection work on behalf of CYF. This work was a mixture of assessments and service provision. Some elements of the strategy were designed to pilot or test some of the more promising long-term demand management concepts, such as allocating low-risk cases to organisations outside CYF.⁷⁷

Review of the Demand Management Strategy

A review of the DMS was carried out to capture the lessons and experiences that CYF and NGOs gained while involved in this strategy. Feedback about the experience of the DMS has been important to identify the best way to develop partnerships within the care and protection community.

⁷² Information provided by a Child, Youth and Family official in email correspondence March 20 2006.

⁷³ Information provided by a Child, Youth and Family official in email correspondence March 20 2006.

⁷⁴ Information provided by a Child, Youth and Family official in email correspondence March 20 2006.

⁷⁵ Information provided by Child, Youth and Family official March 20 2006.

⁷⁶ Information provided by a Child, Youth and Family official in email correspondence April 6 2006.

⁷⁷ Information provided by a Child, Youth and Family official in email correspondence April 6 2006.

The review consisted of three stages:

1. More than 30 telephone interviews with NGO staff to find out about the experiences of NGOs working with CYF.⁷⁸
2. Telephone interviews with CYF staff were completed to look at the experience of DMS from a CYF perspective.⁷⁹
3. An analysis of every case that went out to DMS⁸⁰ in 2004-2005.

Current status

The review of DMS is now complete and it is being used within the DRM team as a reference for successfully implementing DRM.⁸¹

⁷⁸ 'Hui brings NGOs and Child, Youth and Family Together for Kids and Families' Awhi mai awhi atu, September 2005.

⁷⁹ Information provided by Child, Youth and Family official March 15 2006.

⁸⁰ It is estimated that 2,000 cases went out to DMS- Information provided by Child, Youth and Family Official March 15 2006.

⁸¹ Information provided by Child, Youth and Family official March 15 2006.

5.0 MSD: A POLICY AND INITIATIVE UPDATE

5.1 Initiatives led by MSD

The relevant policies outlined in October's *Clearing the Fog* included:

- Ministry of Social Development Statement of Intent 2005/06.
- Draft NGO Family Support Services Workforce Programme of Action, August 2005.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights Of the Child (UNCROC) Five-Year Work Programme 2004-2008.
- Care and Protection Blueprint, February 2003.
- New Zealand Agenda for Children, June 2002.
- Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy, February 2002.
- Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa, January 2002.

5.2 MSD: initiatives to be updated

- Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy.
- NGO Family Support Services Workforce Programme of Action.
- UNCROC Five-Year Work Programme 2004-2008.

5.3 Other MSD initiatives to be updated ⁸²

- Youth Workers Workforce Development Project which grew out of the Youth Development Strategy.
- The Working for Families Package and recent changes to benefit entitlements.
- Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector and Family and Community Services: NGO Capacity Building project.
- The Family Services National Advisory Council (FSNAC).

The role of MSD

MSD's overarching vision is to build "an inclusive New Zealand where all people are able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities."⁸³ MSD have identified focus areas for children, young people and families in the next three years as:

- Implementing an early intervention programme for vulnerable children and their families.
- Strengthening care and protection services for children and young people.
- Reduce the number of working-age benefit recipients.
- Strengthening early intervention for vulnerable children.
- Strengthening family violence prevention, intervention and post-support services.

5.3.1 Te Rito: Family Violence Prevention Strategy

Te Rito provides a framework for implementing a plan of action to address family violence issues. Te Rito is a five-year plan with eighteen areas of action. Te Rito and the subsequent Ministerial Team and Taskforce are a result of the focus on family violence prevention which is being led by MSD.

Status as at October 2005:

In 2004 the Te Rito advisory group, which is made up of non-government and government organisations, acknowledged that the strategy needed to be refocused.⁸⁴ As a result a Ministerial Team was established "to provide leadership across the

⁸² These were also noted within *Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries* not as separate policies but as part of other policies or initiatives.

⁸³ *Leading Social Development: Statement of Intent 2005/06*, Ministry of Social Development, 2005:10.

⁸⁴ <http://www.justice.govt.nz/crime-reduction/strategies-actions.html>

state sector and promote public debate”.⁸⁵ The Ministerial Team is being supported by a Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. The Taskforce reports to the Ministerial Team on what actions the Government could take to prevent family violence.⁸⁶

The Taskforce was established to build on Te Rito and lead efforts to prevent family violence across all sectors.⁸⁷ The Taskforce is chaired by MSD Chief Executive Peter Hughes; and members include chief executives of government agencies, NGOs, and the Children’s Commissioner.

Current Status:

The Taskforce has formed a project team to focus on changing social attitudes and behaviours towards family violence. The project team is carrying out research on social motivations, attitudes and behaviours of the perpetrators of partner violence.⁸⁸ This research was due to be completed by June 2006 and will shape recommendations made by the Taskforce when it reports to the Ministerial Team in July 2006. While the research is being undertaken, the project team is focusing on updating and distributing a community action toolkit, building relationships with communities and supporting initiatives to change attitudes towards family violence.⁸⁹

Te Rito: summary of actions

- March 2002: A family violence strategy (Te Rito) for the next five years was launched.
- 2004: Te Rito advisory group acknowledges that Te Rito needs to be refocused.⁹⁰ A Ministerial Team is established “to provide leadership across the state sector and promote public debate”.⁹¹
- Early 2005: A Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families was established to report to the Ministerial Team on what actions the Government could take to prevent family violence.⁹²

Taskforce: summary of actions

- December 2005: A project team was established to focus on changing social attitudes towards violence. As part of their work the project team is carrying out research on behaviours of the perpetrators of partner violence.
- June 2006: Research undertaken by the project team due to be complete.
- July 2006: Taskforce is due to report to the Ministerial Team.

5.3.2 NGO Family Support Services Workforce Programme of Action

This programme is one of the initiatives that MSD are leading as part of their work to strengthen and support the community and voluntary sector. The programme is a response to the workforce issues that currently face NGOs who work to support families. A draft programme was developed in 2005 after consultation with NGO family support services, training organisations and government agencies. It has five goals:

1. Information - to address information gaps on the nature and context of the NGO family support workforce.
2. Recruitment - to increase the number of registered social workers in NGO family support services.
3. Retention - to retain experienced workers in NGO family support services.

⁸⁵ Te Rito News, June/July 2005:2

⁸⁶ ‘Family and Community Services News’ April 2006.

⁸⁷ ‘Family and Community Services News’ April 2006.

⁸⁸ Te Rito News, December 2005:4

⁸⁹ ‘Family and Community Services News’ April 2006.

⁹⁰ <http://www.justice.govt.nz/crime-reduction/strategies-actions.html>

⁹¹ Te Rito News, June/July 2005:2

⁹² ‘Family and Community Services News’ April 2006.

4. Training – to ensure a high standard of training and encourage best practice across NGO family support services (in all levels).
5. Organisational Development; to support NGO family support services to grow and develop.⁹³

Status as at October 2005:

The draft paper was approved by the Minister of Social Development and Employment in August 2005. When *Clearing the Fog* was released goal one was partially complete and work in all other areas had not begun. A survey of NGO family support services providing a profile of the current NGO workforce including age and ethnicity of workers, job roles, hours worked, pay, qualifications, competencies and caseload complexity was underway and a final report was due early 2006.⁹⁴

Current Status:

At this stage MSD has completed the development of the Workforce Programme of Action for the NGO Family Support Services. The draft programme was circulated for comment among the broader NGO sector early this year and MSD received two dozen submissions from NGOs. The final programme went to the Minister for Social Development and Employment in late March. Once the programme is approved MSD will begin work on priority areas in the programme. The survey of NGO family support services mentioned in *Clearing the Fog* is progressing and was due to be complete by the end of June.⁹⁵

Snapshot of the NGO Family Support Services Workforce Programme of Action

- Some sections of the programme are underway, such as the survey of the NGO family support services sector.
- In December 2005 MSD awarded 75 applications for NGO staff to study towards becoming registered social workers.
- 65 new NGO study awards are available this year. Applications will open on 10 July and close on 29 September 2006.

5.3.3 The Family Services National Advisory Council (FSNAC)

FSNAC was established in December 2003 to support the work of Family and Community Services (FACS).⁹⁶ FSNAC is made up of representatives from NGOs and government agencies who meet every two months.⁹⁷ Meetings are often an update by MSD on current policy development or initiatives. FSNAC is primarily an information sharing forum which aims to influence high level policy related to families.⁹⁸ FSNAC is involved in consultation within government on matters that affect children and families.⁹⁹

⁹³ Draft Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Family Support Services Workforce Programme for Action, Ministry of Social Development.

⁹⁴ 'Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries,' NZCCSS, October 2005.

⁹⁵ Information provided by Ministry of Social Development official in email correspondence, April 10 2006.

⁹⁶ Family and Community Services, (FACS) is an operational division within MSD. An overview of the role of FACS was given in *Clearing the Fog An Overview of Policy*, NZCCSS, October 2005:24.

⁹⁷ Information provided by a member of FSNAC in email correspondence April 10 2006. According to a member of NZCCSS who is on FSNAC it has representatives from Presbyterian Support New Zealand, Barnardos, Plunket, Relationship Services, Foundation for the Blind, CCS, Women's Refuge, the Pacific Foundation, Parent Centre, Ngai Tahu, Te Arawa, the Pacific People's Trust, Maori Women's Welfare League, several iwi service providers, the Ministries of Health, Social Development, and Education, Housing NZ, CYF, Police and Justice. These are just the ones that the NZCCSS member is aware of.

⁹⁸ Information provided by a member of FSNAC in email correspondence April 10 2006.

⁹⁹ Information provided by a member of FSNAC in email correspondence April 11 2006.

Moemoea: the vision of FSNAC

The work of FSNAC is driven by their moemoea (vision/dream). The moemoea outlines the important things that families need in order to flourish. These include important cultural aspects such as people being able to speak their own language, knowing their genealogy and expressing spiritual aspects within their lives if they wish. It also outlines important assets for families such as the ability to own their own home and to have access to resources so they are able to provide for their families.¹⁰⁰ The moemoea encompasses all family/whanau members including Grandparents (Kuia and Kaumatua), Parents (Matua), Children (Tamariki) and Young People (Rangatahi).

Status as at October 2005:

Last year FSNAC was aiming to develop a Family/Whanau Strategy which would “provide a common framework to guide all work around supporting families and children”.¹⁰¹ Three reports had been commissioned - Families Outcomes Hierarchy (August 2004)¹⁰², Families Strategic Framework Intervention Logic (October 2004) and the Families Strategic Framework and Priorities (November 2004). FSNAC was also in the process of reviewing its role and considering expanding its brief to include the monitoring of family policy across government departments. It was planning to examine how to strengthen its connections with other groups across the sector so it could be more representative.¹⁰³

Current status:

Recently, the NGO and Maori and Pacific members of FSNAC have been revisiting the moemoea of FSNAC. The moemoea has now been incorporated into the FACS vision. FSNAC is looking at ways to effectively promote the moemoea. NGO FSNAC members see communication within regions as an important part of promotion. The NZCCSS member who is on FSNAC pointed out the possibility of regional organisations adopting the moemoea.¹⁰⁴ The focus of FSNAC at present is a holistic ‘family centric’ approach. FSNAC have agreed on the current focus areas which are the early years (from antenatal up to five years) and family violence.¹⁰⁵ Implementation of the proposed family/whanau strategy is being managed by FACS with support from FSNAC.

5.3.4 NGO Capacity Building project

FACS worked with the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector¹⁰⁶ (OCVS) on a joint project in 2004-2005 to identify how to improve access to practical support and information, in order to help people run community and voluntary sector organisations.¹⁰⁷

Current status:

FACS and OCVS released a summary report in December 2005 entitled *Building Organisational Capacity in the Community and Voluntary Sector: A Summary Report on Needs and Opportunities (October 2005)*. The Report identified key areas where improved access to information and resources is needed; and suggested

¹⁰⁰ ‘Nga Kaupapa O Moemoea: Family Services National Advisory Council’ Power-point presentation, September 16 2005.

¹⁰¹ FSNAC update in New Dialogue 10 February 2005:4.

¹⁰² Can be viewed at www.familyservices.govt.nz under publications.

¹⁰³ ‘Clearing the Fog: An Overview of Policy’, NZCCSS, October 2005.

¹⁰⁴ Information provided by a member of FSNAC in email correspondence April 10 2006.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Dream or Dreaming? A Moemoea for families,’ Family Services National Advisory Council’ Power-point presentation, September 2005.

¹⁰⁶ For information on OCVS refer to www.ocvs.govt.nz. OCVS is also mentioned in ‘Clearing the Fog: An Overview of Policy,’ NZCCSS, October 2005.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Building Organisational Capacity in the Community and Voluntary Sector: A Summary Report on Needs and Opportunities’ FACS and OCVS, October 2005.

opportunities to strengthen the provision of information and resources in and between organisations.

FACS is now maintaining the catalogue *Managing Well: resources for community and voluntary organisations*.¹⁰⁸ The catalogue was published in August 2005 and aims to assist people to set up and run community organisations.¹⁰⁹ FACS is updating the Community Development Resource Kit with the Department of Internal Affairs. The kit provides basic guidance for people setting up and running community organisations.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ 'Building Organisational Capacity in the Community and Voluntary Sector: A Summary Report on Needs and Opportunities' FACS and OCVS, October 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Information provided by Ministry of Social Development official in email correspondence April 10 2006.

¹¹⁰ 'Rejuvenating the Community Development Resource Kit' The Department of Internal Affairs, March 2006.

6.0 OTHER RELEVANT INITIATIVES AND POLICY

6.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) Five-Year Work Programme 2004-2008

The Ministry of Youth Development (MYD)¹¹¹ is leading the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) Work Programme which seeks to address and improve children's rights in New Zealand. The work programme comprises 28 items which a range of government departments contribute to addressing. It is a response to New Zealand's obligation to UNCROC, signed in 1993. As a signatory to UNCROC, the New Zealand Government is required to report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child every five years outlining what it is doing to improve children's rights.¹¹² The relevant activities within the UNCROC programme were noted in *Clearing the Fog* and are outlined in the fact sheet on the NZCCSS website.

Status as at October 2005:

MYD reported to the Government on New Zealand's progress in implementing UNCROC work items.

Current status of UNCROC:

Since *Clearing the Fog* was released some government departments have been working on changes that will bring their department into line with UNCROC recommendations. MYD are updating a report on the progress which is now due to be sent to Cabinet by the end of November 2006.¹¹³ MYD have provided NZCCSS with a progress update on relevant activities. The details of progress in work centred on UNCROC within government departments can be found in a fact sheet on the NZCCSS website.

What does UNCROC really mean?

- The UNCROC work programme may not change the way you work directly, however it is a large and important piece of work for addressing significant issues facing children and families in New Zealand.
- Important recommendations from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) include reviewing the minimum age of criminal prosecution, amending Section 59 of the *Crimes Act*, and giving more assistance to child abuse victims.

6.2 Youth Workers Workforce Development Project (YWWDP)

Youth workers face many barriers including considerable stress, low wages and working in stressful and pressured environments.¹¹⁴ MYD is trying to address issues for youth workers around funding, training and infrastructure (such as the possible need for a code of ethics). The YWWDP began in July 2005 with the aim of supporting and strengthening the youth work sector.¹¹⁵

Status as at October 2005:

Last October MYD was in the process of gathering more detailed information on the youth work sector workforce. They were going to provide preliminary advice to the Minister of Youth Affairs on ways to address issues by the end of January 2006.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ The Ministry of Youth Development is responsible for promoting and supporting the development of young people aged from 12 to 24 years.

¹¹² United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Five-Year Work Programme, Ministry of Youth Development, September 2004.

¹¹³ Information provided by a Ministry of Youth Development official in email correspondence July 11 2006.

¹¹⁴ Information provided by Salvation Army representative May 11 2006.

¹¹⁵ 'Youth Workers' Workforce Development Project.' Ministry of Youth Development, www.myd.govt.nz

¹¹⁶ 'Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries', NZCCSS, October 2005.

Current Status:

To date, MYD have carried out a number of steps as part of the project.¹¹⁷ They have:

- Completed a literature review of the issues facing the youth worker workforce in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom.
- Completed an 'environmental scan' of government and non-government initiatives focused on improving workforce capacity and conditions that may be relevant to the youth worker workforce.
- Assisted the National Youth Workers Network to finalise its national research project.
- Developed a draft discussion and public consultation document about how to strengthen and support the youth worker workforce (to be revised).
- Established a project advisory group made up of representatives from the youth work sector.
- Partially funded the National Youth Workers Network up until June 2006¹¹⁸.

In April 2006 the project advisory group discussed the next steps of the project, which include looking at the key areas of involvement in local youth worker networks / collectives; professional supervision for youth workers; professional development for youth workers; study awards for youth work qualifications; and a code of ethics for youth workers.¹¹⁹ Further details are on the relevant fact sheet on the NZCCSS website.

What does this mean for NZCCSS members?

People who work with youth face many barriers that make their work stressful and difficult. Although the project is in its infancy it does show there is recognition within government of the problems that youth workers face. The Ministry of Youth Development have been meeting with youth work groups informally, including those at the Get Connected Gathering at Zeal in Wellington.

6.3 Te Tahuu-Improving Mental Health 2005-2015: The Second New Zealand Mental Health and Addiction Plan

Te Tahuu sets out the Government's plan for mental health and addiction from 2005-2015. It clarifies priorities to 2015 and builds on the mental health strategies which are already in place.¹²⁰

Status as at October 2005:

The Ministry of Health and District Health Boards (DHBs) were to jointly develop a detailed action plan to be presented to Cabinet by March 2006 outlining ways to address the above listed challenges to 2015.¹²¹

Current Status:

The draft of the detailed action plan was completed and Cabinet approved it in March 2006, with the document being available for public consultation from March 24 to April 28 2006.¹²² The relevant action areas in the action plan can be found on the fact sheet on the NZCCSS website.

¹¹⁷ Information provided by a Ministry of Youth Development official in email correspondence March 24 2006.

¹¹⁸ Information provided by a Ministry of Youth Development official in email correspondence March 24 2006.

¹¹⁹ Information provided by a Ministry of Youth Development official in telephone correspondence May 22 2006.

¹²⁰ 'Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries,' NZCCSS October 2005.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Te Tahuu Improving Mental Health 2005 – 2015: The second New Zealand Mental Health and Addiction Plan, Ministry of Health, March 2006.

What the Action Plan means

Part of the Action is likely to result in DHBs and the Ministry of Health taking further action to address problems within mental health and addiction services for children and families, including increasing access to specialist mental health and addiction services for children and youth.¹²³

6.4 New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights – Mana ki te Tangata¹²⁴

In February 2005 the Human Rights Commission (HRC) published the New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights – Mana ki te Tangata. The aim was to protect, recognise and respect the human rights of everyone living in New Zealand.¹²⁵ The Action Plan identifies the most pressing human rights issues that need to be addressed in the next five years.¹²⁶

Status as at October 2005:

When *Clearing the Fog* was published, the HRC were in the process of developing implementation programmes with specific timelines for relevant agencies and organisations. They were due to forward a progress report on the action plan to Government in November 2005.¹²⁷

Current Status:

The HRC have now sent a report detailing progress on the action plan to Government. The Government welcomed publication of the Action Plan but has yet to formally respond. Despite this there has been steady progress on a number of the priority actions at central government level, as well as by regional and local government, and within the business and community sectors. The HRC has been actively engaged with regional and local government and the community and voluntary sectors to promote the Action Plan, and is also working towards goals set out in the action plan through their own initiatives. Details on initiatives that the HRC are taking in order to contribute to addressing issues in the action plan can be found on the fact sheet on the NZCCSS website.¹²⁸

6.5 The Youth Offending Services Effectiveness Checklist (YOSEC)

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is co-ordinating the development of the YOSEC to help funders and providers assess and improve the quality of youth justice services.

Status as at October 2005:

Last November the MOJ were in the process of developing a research based tool to help funders and providers assess and improve the quality of the youth justice activities.

Current Status:

NZCCSS has been advised that the YOSEC resource will be completed by September 2006 and that the Ministry is currently examining how to promote its use.¹²⁹

¹²³ Te Tahuu-Improving Mental Health 2005-2015: The Second New Zealand Mental Health and Addiction Plan, Ministry of Health, March 2006.

¹²⁴ The New Zealand Action Plan on Human Rights, Human Rights Commission February 2005

¹²⁵ The New Zealand Action Plan on Human Rights, Human Rights Commission February 2005:2

¹²⁶ Human Rights Commission, Statement of Intent 2005/2006, www.hrc.co.nz

¹²⁷ 'Clearing the Fog Policy Summaries,' NZCCSS October 2005.

¹²⁸ information provided by a Human Rights Commission official in email correspondence July 12 2006.

¹²⁹ Information provided by a Ministry of Justice official in email correspondence April 3 2006.

7.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION TO MONITOR

Young Offenders (Serious Crimes) Bill

The age of criminal responsibility in New Zealand is 10 years of age. Between 10 and 13 years children can be prosecuted for murder and manslaughter, but not for any other offence. At 14 young people can be prosecuted for the full range of offences, although most prosecutions are dealt with in the Youth Court. The age of criminal prosecution has recently come under review for the fourth time in ten years.¹³⁰ New Zealand First Member of Parliament Ron Mark's *Young Offenders (Serious Crimes) Bill* seeks to lower the age of criminal responsibility to 10 years of age for most offences, widen the range of serious offences that can be heard in adult courts and make any child who has been convicted of an offence three times be treated as an adult on their fourth conviction.¹³¹

Current Status: The *Young Offenders (Serious Crimes) Bill* was debated in Parliament on March 29 2006 and has now gone to the Law and Order Select Committee.¹³² The committee is due to report on the Bill by September 28, 2006. Submissions for the Bill closed on July 14, 2006.¹³³

Section 59 and the Crimes Amendment Bill

Section 59 of the *Crimes Act 1961* states that "every parent or person in place of a parent of a child is justified in using force by way of correction towards a child if that force is reasonable in the circumstances."¹³⁴ The purpose of the *Crimes Amendment (Abolition of Force as a Justification for Child Discipline) Bill*, introduced into Parliament by Green MP Sue Bradford, is to "abolish the use of force by parents as a justification for disciplining children."¹³⁵ According to Ms Bradford, Section 59 has enabled parents and caregivers to have justification, excuse or defence in physical abuse towards children.¹³⁶

Status as at October 2005:

In June 2005 the Bill was drawn from the Member's Bill Ballot. It passed its first reading in Parliament on July 27 2005.

Current Status

Since *Clearing the Fog* was published, public submissions on the Bill have been submitted (they were due at the end of February 2006). The Bill has been sent to the Justice and Electoral Select Committee which is considering public submissions. The committee are due to report back to Parliament on October 31 2006.¹³⁷

¹³⁰ '12 to 24' Ministry of Youth Development Newsletter, Issue 2 April 2006.

¹³¹ 'Greens to oppose Child Imprisonment Bill' Green Party member Metiria Turei, March 21 2006.

¹³² www.nzfirst.org.nz.

¹³³ Bills Before Select Committees' accessed from the Parliament website on June 16 2006 at <http://publications.clerk.parliament.govt.nz.clients.intergen.net.nz/BillsBeforeSelectCommittees.aspx>.

¹³⁴ www.nzfirst.org.nz.

¹³⁵ www.clerk.parliament.govt.nz.

¹³⁶ www.greens.org.nz.

¹³⁷ 'Bills Before Select Committees' accessed from the Parliament website on May 22 2006 at <http://publications.clerk.parliament.govt.nz.clients.intergen.net.nz/BillsBeforeSelectCommittees.aspx>.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This report forms the third and final stage of the Future Fit project which the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) embarked on in 2005. Stage one provided a snapshot of the government policies pertaining to children and families. The second stage provided readers with a snapshot of six Christian social service agency case studies, highlighting examples of effective preventative practice models that NZCCSS members provide. The aim of this report is to provide a snapshot and update of the policies and initiatives outlined in stage one. In addition to this, we have taken the opportunity to provide a summary of recent changes in legislation, the benefit system and the merging of Child, Youth and Family (CYF) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). Further details on the project itself are noted below.

We believe there have been some positive developments since *Clearing the Fog: an Overview of Policy (Stage 1)* was published in late 2005. CYF have continued to focus on achieving more permanent living arrangements for children in out-of-home care with their new guidelines for achieving permanency. The review of youth justice and the resources that have been developed for youth justice workers are positive. The Differential Response Model (DRM) has, we note, progressed more slowly than first expected and the initiative's implementation will continue to be monitored by NZCCSS.

MSD's family violence initiatives have continued to gain momentum through the Te Rito Strategy, the Ministerial Team, the Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families and the recent project team. They have also acknowledged the workforce capacity issues that exist within non-government organisations. Their programme of action for addressing workforce issues shows promise. The Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) has begun work to address important issues for youth workers – a pleasing development. MYD also are continuing to monitor the progress of different government departments with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) work programme.

Changes in the Working for Families package are welcome, but it is important to highlight the needs of those who are unable to work, and the importance for policies which are fair and just for all New Zealanders.

The merger of Child, Youth and Family and the Ministry of Social Development will provide both challenges and opportunities for these two agencies. The focus must remain on supporting children and families in need and responding to these needs compassionately and responsively.

The Government plays an important role in providing services to children, young people and their families. As identified in this report, there is still much to be done in ensuring these services are just, compassionate and responsive to ever-changing social needs. NZCCSS will continue to advocate strongly for a shared and real commitment to a whole of government approach to these issues.

9.0 BACKGROUND TO FUTURE FIT

Future Fit: Christian Family Support Services in Aotearoa.

In 2005 NZCCSS was successful in obtaining funding through the Tindall Foundation for a one-year research project known as Future Fit. The objectives of the Future Fit Project are to:

- identify what is happening within government that will impact on members;
- alert members to what critical changes are imminent;
- summarise the principles underlying what effective practice in Christian Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) service delivery looks like;
- provide advice to government agencies on the likely (and actual) impact of their policies on the practices of our member agencies, including unintended consequences.

These objectives were to be achieved in three reports:

- *Clearing the Fog: an Overview of Policy* (Stage 1, October 2005)
- *Effective Practice in Preventative Services: Six NZCCSS Case Member Case Studies* (Stage 2, April 2006) and
- *Clearing the Fog: An Update of Policy* (Stage 3, July 2006)

Stage 1

The *Clearing the Fog: an Overview of Policy (Stage 1)* report gave NZCCSS members a snapshot of policy and provided an understanding of what changes are taking place in government policies that could impact on the services they provide for children, young people and families.

Stage 2

In *Effective Practice in Preventative Services: Six NZCCSS Case Member Case Studies (Stage 2)* six Christian social service agencies were selected as case studies to highlight examples of effective preventative practice models that NZCCSS members provide in order to protect, promote and potentially expand their work which supports vulnerable children and families in New Zealand. The focus of the case studies was to highlight the core elements of practice that make their services effective for families.

Stage 3

The objective of *Clearing the Fog: An Update of Policy (Stage 3)* is to provide NZCCSS member agencies that have an interest in supporting vulnerable children and families with the most recent information on policy developments. It builds directly on the *Clearing the Fog: an Overview of Policy* report that was published by NZCCSS in late 2005.

10.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CPAG Child Poverty Action Group, Aotearoa New Zealand

CPAG is an independent charity working towards eliminating child poverty through research, advocacy and education.¹³⁸

CTC Child Tax Credit

CTC is a per-child payment for families with dependant children who are not receiving a benefit; it has now been replaced by the IWP.

CYF Child, Youth and Family Services

CYF are a government department focussing on protecting and caring for children who are “being abused or neglected or who have problem behaviour.”¹³⁹

DMS Demand Management Strategy

DMS was developed in 2004 to address the high demand on CYF. The main objective of the DMS was to reduce and stabilise demand on CYF Services and reduce the risk for care and protection intake services.¹⁴⁰

DRM Differential Response Model

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.¹⁴¹

FACS Family and Community Services

FACS is a unit of MSD, responsible for co-ordinating non-government and government organisations to support families and communities.¹⁴²

FGC Family Group Conference

FGCs are meetings which are held between a family group, whanau, hapu or iwi and CYF social worker to decide the best option for a child or young persons care.¹⁴³

FSNAC Family Services National Advisory Council

FSNAC is made up of a wide range of representatives from non-government and government organisations who meet every two months. FSNAC is primarily an information sharing forum which aims to influence high level policy related to Families.¹⁴⁴

HRC Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission is an organisation that advocates for an understanding and appreciation of human rights in Aotearoa, New Zealand.¹⁴⁵

IRD Inland Revenue Department

IRD is a government agency which collects taxes for funding government programmes.¹⁴⁶

IWP In-Work Payment

IWP is a new entitlement which replaced the CTC as of April 1 2006.

¹³⁸ 'About Us' www.cpag.org.nz .

¹³⁹ 'About Us' www.cyf.govt.nz.

¹⁴⁰ Information provided by a Child, Youth and Family official in email correspondence April 6 2006.

¹⁴¹ Developing the Differential Response Model, www.cyf.govt.nz June 14 2005.

¹⁴² 'About Us' www.familyservices.govt.nz .

¹⁴³ 'Family Group Conferences: care and protection' information pamphlet, Child Youth and Family.

¹⁴⁴ Information provided by a member of FSNAC in email correspondence April 10 2006.

¹⁴⁵ 'Welcome to the website of the Human Rights Commission' www.hrc.co.nz .

¹⁴⁶ 'About Us' www.ird.govt.nz .

MOJ the Ministry of Justice

The focus of MOJ is the lead agency for justice which aims for “safer communities” and “a fairer, more credible and more effective justice system.”¹⁴⁷

MSD the Ministry of Social Development

Ministry responsible for providing social policy advice to the Government and delivering social services to New Zealanders.¹⁴⁸

MYD the Ministry of Youth Development

The broad focus of MYD is to involve young people between the ages of 12 and 24 years in the “social, educational, economic and cultural development of New Zealand.”¹⁴⁹ MYD are administered by MSD.

NGO Non-Government Organisation

NGO refers to organisations independent from government.¹⁵⁰

OCVS Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector

OCVS aims to address the overarching issues facing the community and voluntary sector and also “raise the profile of the sector within government.”¹⁵¹

SSC State Services Commission

The State Services Commission ensures that State Services are well placed to carry out Government policy and meet the needs of New Zealanders. Their specialist role is as a leader on issues of State Services development.¹⁵²

TAS Temporary Additional Support

TAS is a hardship benefit which replaced the Special Benefit as of April 1 2006.

UNCROC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNCROC was adopted and opened for countries to sign and ratify in November 1989, it was entered into force in September 1990. New Zealand ratified UNCROC in 1993.¹⁵³ UNCROC sets out the important components for how all children should be treated.¹⁵⁴

WFF Working for Families

WFF is the name given to the changes to income assistance, childcare assistance and accommodation assistance which began implementation in October 2004 and will run through until April 2007.¹⁵⁵

YWWDP Youth Workers Workforce Development Project

This is led by MYD and aims to identify practical ways to support and strengthen the youth work sector.¹⁵⁶

YOSEC Youth Offending Services Effectiveness Checklist

YOSEC is a tool which the Ministry of Justice is developing it will help funders and providers assess and improve the quality of the youth justice activities.

¹⁴⁷ ‘About Us’ Ministry of Justice, www.justice.govt.nz .

¹⁴⁸ www.msd.govt.nz.

¹⁴⁹ ‘About Us’ Ministry of Youth Development, www.myd.govt.nz accessed April 12 2006.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Inland Revenue’ <http://simple.wikipedia.org> .

¹⁵¹ ‘About Us’ Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector www.ocvs.govt.nz accessed May 8 2006.

¹⁵² ‘State Services Commission’ www.govt.nz/record?tid=2&recordid=38 accessed May 17 2006.

¹⁵³ www.cyf.govt.nz .

¹⁵⁴ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Five-Year Work Programme 2004-2008, Ministry of Youth Development, September 2004.

¹⁵⁵ ‘Working for Families: Fact sheet 4,’ Ministry of Social Development, accessed March 3 2006.

¹⁵⁶ ‘Youth Workers’ Workforce Development Project.’ Ministry of Youth Development, www.myd.govt.nz .