



# Care and Protection

## Update

December 2005

This update provides information about what Government is doing to improve the systems and services that provide protection to vulnerable children and young people. It describes how the Care and Protection Blueprint 2003 (the Blueprint) has been implemented and identifies ongoing priority work. Progress to date on each of the action areas in the Blueprint is summarised.



In recent years, two key documents have formed the basis of Government's response to issues around family violence and child abuse and neglect.

In March 2002, *Te Rito: the New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy* was launched. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) led the development of the strategy and co-ordinated input from government, non-government and community organisations. The strategy sets out a five-year implementation plan to work towards achieving the vision of families/ whānau living free from violence. Many of the actions were new, others were already underway or were refocused to address a particular need or to include a family violence prevention component.

In his 2000 review of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYF), former Principal Youth Court Judge Mick Brown identified the need for a blueprint for the care and protection community to support CYF. In February 2003, the Government released the Care and Protection Blueprint 2003, which outlined its strategy for enhancing the services provided to children and young people who were at risk of, or who had suffered from, abuse and neglect. The Blueprint was developed under the leadership of a Blueprint Development Group made up of government and non-government representatives involved in the care and protection of children and young people. It provided a set of guiding principles, goals and an action plan.

Initially *Te Rito* and the Blueprint were progressed as separate strategies and substantial progress was made on implementing many of the actions. An update of the Blueprint was scheduled for 2004. By that time it had



become clear that, because of the strong links between partner abuse and child abuse and neglect, the work of both strategies should be progressed together. Government and non-government agencies who had been involved in *Te Rito* and the Blueprint were consulted and they agreed that the strategies should be progressed in a more integrated and holistic way. In some cases, this involved integrating remaining actions from the two strategies into joint work streams, with the implementation to be monitored through *Te Rito*. In other areas, the scope of existing projects was broadened to cover the full spectrum of family violence and care and protection issues. The new approach meant it was no longer necessary or appropriate to produce an update of the Blueprint.

In addition to the Blueprint and Te Rito actions, a number of other key initiatives have been undertaken in a concerted effort to strengthen the care and protection sector. Significant work has included:

- the implementation of the CYF Baseline Review and work to develop a differential response model
- the establishment of Family and Community Services (FACS) within the Ministry of Social Development
- a focus on early intervention to ensure all children get the best start in life.

You'll find more information about these initiatives later in this update, as well as a final summary of the Blueprint actions.



Reducing family violence and child abuse and neglect remains a key focus for Government. Opportunity for All New Zealanders, published in 2004, identified minimising family violence and the abuse and neglect of children and older persons as a key priority.

To progress this work, a Ministerial Team has been established to provide high-level leadership across the state sector on family violence prevention. It is supported by a Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families made up of chief executives from a number of key government and non-government agencies, the Chief District Court Judge, the Principal Family Court Judge, the Children's Commissioner, and the Chief Families Commissioner.

In March 2005, the Minister for Social Development and Employment hosted a workshop for people from across government, non-government, academic and research organisations. The issues raised and the actions suggested during the workshop have informed the Taskforce's work programme.

The Taskforce has met six times since June 2005 and is making sound progress in developing proposals to prevent violence within families. This work will build on Te Rito and the Blueprint. During its work, the Taskforce will also look to identify opportunities for immediate action.

The work undertaken since 2002 has significantly changed and strengthened the care and protection sector, and has addressed many of the critical issues identified in the Blueprint. We would like to thank all those government, non-government and community organisations who have shown such strong support for these initiatives to prevent family violence and child abuse and neglect.

You can keep up to date with our ongoing work through Te Rito News. To subscribe, email: [violencefree@familyservices.govt.nz](mailto:violencefree@familyservices.govt.nz)

## Key Developments within Child, Youth and Family

The 2003 CYF Baseline Review clarified CYF's role and key outcomes.

A number of recommendations have been implemented to strengthen the organisation.

CYF's community funding responsibilities are being reviewed to ensure they align with its core functions. The first stage of the review resulted in the administration of some funding transferring to FACS on 1 July 2005. The outcome of the review will be known by June 2006. Service providers will be advised of any impacts on the administration of their funding well in advance of any changes.





Government is seeking amendments to the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 which outline a differential response model (DRM) to care and protection notifications. Current legislative and common law obligations require CYF and the Police to undertake a significant investigation into the vast majority of care and protection notifications.

Evidence in New Zealand and internationally has shown that a full social work investigation is not always the most appropriate response. Some care and protection concerns are best addressed through working with the family on a co-operative basis to assess their needs. Services and support can then be provided to address problems that may be placing their children at risk.

Under the proposed DRM, CYF will undertake a preliminary assessment of every care and protection notification. This assessment will determine the most appropriate response according to a menu of options provided in the legislative amendments.

The proposed amendments will also enable other approved organisations, including non-government organisations (NGOs), to undertake certain non-investigative responses on behalf of CYF. CYF is working together with NGOs and other government agencies to develop a DRM that will build on effective collaboration with NGOs and other government agencies, to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and their families. Testing of elements of the DRM started October 2005. You can find out more at [www.cyf.govt.nz](http://www.cyf.govt.nz)

CYF has also developed a workforce development plan to address workforce capability issues. The plan seeks to build CYF's social work capability through focusing on retention, professionalism and recruitment. MSD is working with key stakeholders to develop a plan to address workforce capability issues for the broader care and protection sector.

## Establishing Family and Community Services in MSD



FACS was established as part of MSD in July 2004, to lead and co-ordinate government and non-government actions to support families and communities.

FACS's goals are to:

- support social cohesion and participation in communities
- support family resilience and help families to be free from violence
- assist families and communities to access the information and knowledge they need to thrive.

By focusing on prevention and early intervention, FACS seeks to prevent violence within families, thereby reducing the number of families requiring the care and protection of CYF.

The role of FACS is to:

- improve information about, and access to, family and community services
- lead services planning and funding co-ordination across government agencies and communities
- promote and fund programmes to support families and communities, and to prevent family violence.

For more information visit [www.familyservices.govt.nz](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz)

## Early Intervention

MSD is working with other sectors on a multi-year early intervention programme of work that aims to ensure all children get the best start in life and are put on positive developmental pathways. The best way to do this is to build on the current provisions to strengthen families to support their members and ensure all children receive quality support. Making significant improvements requires taking a long-term view and sustained action across the social services sector.

Government has agreed to initial investments along with policy work to further develop the approach. A package of initiatives has been funded through Budget 2005:

- piloting the provision of parent support and outreach activities in early childhood education centres
- piloting the provision of parent support to prevent early child behaviour problems, building on the existing Well Child services, in three district health boards
- expanding Family Start to small towns and rural areas
- piloting the provision of financial assistance to give Family Start/Early Start families access to early childhood education
- improving the qualifications of Family Start family/whānau workers
- new services for children who witness family violence.

MSD is leading work to further develop the early intervention approach which will build on existing services, infrastructure and Budget 2005 investment to ensure:

- all families will have easy access to good information and advice about parenting
- all families will be able to access community-based formal and informal support networks
- all families will be provided with quality services to help them raise their children
- families with additional needs will have access to quality services to meet those additional needs
- families and children that continue to be vulnerable to poor outcomes will receive effective, co-ordinated intensive protective and remedial services.



## Conclusion

There has been significant progress in addressing the issues that led to the development of the Blueprint in 2003. Actions taken following CYF's Baseline Review mean we have a much stronger statutory agency to work closely with non-government agencies in the sector.

Collaborative relationships will be further enhanced through the implementation of the differential response model. As well as these significant improvements at the crisis intervention end, there is a continuing commitment to invest in early intervention to prevent the need for statutory services.

These changes are part of an integrated approach across government sectors, and non-government agencies, to ensure all children have the best start in life and are free from violence, abuse and neglect.

Further updates will be available through Te Rito News, published five times a year by Family and Community Services, a service of the Ministry of Social Development.



## Areas of Action in the Care and Protection Blueprint

A summary of each Blueprint Action Area is provided below. The implementation of the actions was overseen by the Blueprint Steering Group (BSG) consisting of government and non-government members.

<p>1. Māori leadership of, and involvement in, the care and protection community</p>	<p>Two consultation hui were held with Māori working in the care and protection sector. The BSG subsequently agreed that the intention behind this action area needed to be woven into all work underway to address family violence and child abuse and neglect. Key linkages have been made with Te Rito actions.</p> <p>Te Puni Kōkiri is funding the implementation of Whānau Violence: A Māori Conceptual Framework through Project Mauriora. This project promotes “zero tolerance” of Māori whānau violence by building the capability of Māori practitioners to provide intervention to Māori victims, perpetrators and their whānau. For more information, see the August issue of Te Rito News.</p>
<p>2. Engage Pacific and other ethnic communities in the planning and provision of care and protection services</p>	<p>This action has been integrated into the Pacific strand of Te Rito. Over the next three years, the Strong Pacific Families strategy will be implemented in four regions with the aim of building strong Pacific families living free from violence. Strong Pacific Families is focused on two action areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• funding community meetings to make people more aware of family violence by working through community and church leaders</li> <li>• developing resources to increase the awareness of family violence. For more information, see the June/July issue of Te Rito News.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Incorporate the views of children, young people and their families into the planning and provision of care and protection services</p>	<p>A web-based toolkit has been produced to encourage service providers to incorporate the views of children, young people and families into the development and design of care and protection services. The toolkit provides practical information and tips on how to consult with children and young people. It includes case studies illustrating how services can be improved through listening to the experiences of service users. The toolkit is available at: <a href="http://www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/children-and-young-people">www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/children-and-young-people</a></p>
<p>4. Develop outcome measures for the care and protection community</p>	<p>Initial work has identified a range of New Zealand and international outcome measurement systems and frameworks. MSD is leading ongoing work in consultation with CYF and other key government and non-government agencies. The introduction of a consistent approach to measuring outcomes among all providers of care and protection services is a long-term goal.</p>

<p>5. Promote and enhance evaluation</p>	<p>Research into the extent of evaluation practices in the non-government care and protection community has been completed. This confirmed a real commitment among community providers to best practice in service delivery. It also identified a range of capacity and capability needs in the sector. There are several initiatives underway that meet the intention of this action area.</p> <p>The Social Policy Evaluation and Research Committee (SPEaR) provides a co-ordination hub for government agencies and the social research and evaluation sector to improve capability, capacity and outcomes. SPEaR oversees a number of initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing best practice guidelines for social policy research and evaluation</li> <li>• an information portal including online news bulletins</li> <li>• a Linkages programme with various grant categories which applicants can use to build capacity and capability.</li> </ul> <p>For more information, go to <a href="http://www.spear.govt.nz">www.spear.govt.nz</a></p> <p>A New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse has been launched as part of Te Rito. It is a dedicated website that provides a mechanism for disseminating information about effective services and good practice research and evaluation. For more information go to <a href="http://www.nzfvc.org.nz">www.nzfvc.org.nz</a></p>
<p>6. Improve interagency co-ordination, collaboration and communication</p>	<p>Te Rito includes an action area around co-ordination, collaboration and communication. Service co-ordination is also a theme of the early intervention work programme. A number of existing initiatives will improve aspects of co-ordination and collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Violence Funding Circuit Breaker – <a href="http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/our-work-/circuit-breaker/index.html">www.familyservices.govt.nz/our-work-/circuit-breaker/index.html</a></li> <li>• Te Rito Community Collaboration Fund – see Te Rito News June/July 2005</li> <li>• Family Safety Teams – see Te Rito News June/July 2005</li> <li>• Local Services Mapping – <a href="http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/our-work/local-services-mapping.html">www.familyservices.govt.nz/our-work/local-services-mapping.html</a></li> <li>• Budget 2005 funding to enable increased hours for Strengthening Families co-ordinators.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Develop a government investment strategy for care and protection services</p>	<p>The first phase of the Blueprint Investment Strategy was undertaken in conjunction with CYF's Baseline Review and focused on improving health and education outcomes for children involved with CYF. A package of initiatives to improve outcomes for CYF clients received Budget funding in 2004 and 2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improving information on the health and education needs of CYF clients</li> <li>• improving services for children and young people with disabilities</li> <li>• improving access for, and the engagement of, CYF clients in mainstream education and the Correspondence School</li> </ul>

- an interagency strategy for children and young people with severe antisocial behaviour
- CYF and DHBs implementing joint action plans to improve access to mental health services for CYF clients
- workforce development to support CYF clients with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- enhancing support for parents with mental health problems or disabilities who have children involved with CYF
- piloting two local collaborative interagency initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for high-needs CYF clients.

Substantial progress has been made on these initiatives. Action plans have been developed to improve CYF clients' access to mental health services in Wellington and Porirua and significant progress has been made in the Auckland region. Funding has been provided to enable intensive one-to-one support for CYF clients in mainstream classrooms and additional supervision for those enrolled in the Correspondence School.

The Blueprint Investment Strategy originally intended to make recommendations on investments across all care and protection processes and services from prevention through to early intervention and statutory services. These recommendations are being implemented through a range of mechanisms including through new initiatives developed by FACS and through the early intervention work programme.

#### 8. Address workforce issues

A Workforce Development Group (WDG) was established in 2002. The WDG produced a report that identified key workforce issues and made recommendations for addressing these issues. You can view the report at [www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/children-and-young-people/care-protection-blueprint/progress-reports.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/work-areas/children-and-young-people/care-protection-blueprint/progress-reports.html)

MSD is using this report to inform the development of a social services sector workforce programme of action. Consultation with key stakeholders has identified the following key areas:

- recruitment – increasing the supply of social workers
- retention – establishing career pathways, providing professional development opportunities, and addressing other issues such as remuneration levels, case loads and supervisory support for social workers and other social service workers
- training and development – increasing opportunities to upgrade qualifications, ensuring a high standard of training and encouraging the application of 'best practice' across the sector
- organisational development – ensuring the ongoing viability of NGOs and assisting NGOs to take collective ownership of workforce development and to develop work environments and systems that support staff
- improving information on the non-government workforce.

	<p>Implementing the proposed actions will involve consultation with the care and protection sector.</p> <p>Budget 2005 funding was allocated for study awards to help NGO workers study part-time towards a degree qualification (or equivalent) in social work.</p>
9. Review the role of Care and Protection Resource Panels	<p>The Review of Care and Protection Resource Panels is completed. A discussion document was circulated in 2002 to get community input on the role and operation of the panels. As a result of this review, Government is seeking an amendment to the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 to clarify the statutory role of the panels. CYF has also made a number of changes to improve the way the panels operate.</p>
10. Identify and promote good practice	<p>A literature review on the effectiveness of programmes and services in addressing child abuse and neglect was completed in 2003. There is work underway as part of Te Rito to develop a New Zealand standard on screening and risk assessment for family violence including child abuse and neglect. Standards New Zealand has developed a draft standard which provides best practice guidelines for individuals and organisations involved in screening, risk assessment and/or safety planning. A process of public consultation has been completed and the standard is expected to be finalised by May 2006.</p> <p>The New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse provides a mechanism for collating and distributing information about good practice.</p>

## Getting more information

For more information about the areas covered in this update, visit

[www.msd.govt.nz](http://www.msd.govt.nz)

[www.familyservices.govt.nz](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz)

[www.cyf.govt.nz](http://www.cyf.govt.nz)

Te Rito News is available on the FACS website [www.familyservices.govt.nz](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz)



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