



Children's Action Plan He Taonga Te Tamariki

Identifying, Supporting and Protecting Vulnerable Children

PROGRESS REPORT

December 2015

Publisher

Children's Action Plan.

More information on the Children's Action Plan is available at: www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz

Introduction

In 2012, the *White Paper for Vulnerable Children* and the *Children's Action Plan* (CAP) set out key actions required to get better results for our vulnerable children. This followed widespread public consultation about how we could improve the ways we identify vulnerable children and ensure that they get the protection, services and support they need.

In addition to the 5,000 children in Child, Youth and Family (CYF) care¹, there are about 20,000 vulnerable children² across New Zealand *who are at significant risk of harm to their wellbeing now and into the future as a consequence of the environment in which they are being raised and, in some cases, due to their own complex needs*³. Addressing their multiple needs is a top priority for Government and communities, not just because of their immediate circumstances but also because the earlier issues are addressed, the better the results for the child across their whole life.

The CAP includes legislative changes to keep children safe; local, cross-sector Children's Teams to identify and address their unmet needs; support for information sharing, recording and reporting; and workforce capability development.

Government's Better Public Services (BPS) programme is dedicated to supporting vulnerable children as measured by three specific targets:

- Result 2. Increase participation in early childhood education (Education lead)
- Result 3. Increase infant immunisation rates and reduce the incidence of rheumatic fever (Health lead)
- Result 4. Reduce the number of assaults on children (Social Development lead).

By addressing the needs of vulnerable children earlier and more effectively, the CAP also contributes to other BPS priorities, including:

- Result 5: Increase the proportion of 18-year-olds with NCEA level 2 or equivalent qualification (Education lead)
- Result 7: Reduce youth crime (New Zealand Police lead).

The Productivity Commission recently released its [report](#) into how government social services can work better for New Zealand's most vulnerable communities. Central to this is making sure that government has flexible structures and processes so decisions can be made to suit local circumstances and ensure that services match clients' needs. Children's Teams are already well ahead on this.

The Minister for Social Development set up the Expert Advisory Panel on modernising Child, Youth and Family (CYF) earlier this year to take a thorough look at how vulnerable children and families/whānau are given the help they need. In October 2015, the Panel released its [interim report](#) following extensive consultation and research⁴. The report emphasised the need to significantly lift the quality of services and support for our most vulnerable children, especially Māori and Pacific children. The report gave Children's Teams a key place in the future system, supporting CYF through their preventive investment approach.

The final Expert Advisory Panel report, due to the Minister for Social Development in December 2015, as well as a range of other social investment work across government, will come together in a comprehensive *Vulnerable Children's Plan* in 2016. The new *Vulnerable Children's Plan* will reflect Government's focus on 'at-risk' 0-5 year olds within the wider 0-24 year old priority group, and set out how government and other organisations will work together to better meet Government's priorities for vulnerable children across all areas of their wellbeing.

In the interim, this refresh of the 2012 CAP provides an opportunity to reflect on progress to date and look towards getting even better results for vulnerable children in the future.



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Purpose

The refreshed *Children's Action Plan 2015* reports on the work by government agencies, Children's Teams, non-government organisations (NGOs), iwi and communities to give effect to the actions and activities of the *Children's Action Plan 2012*.

Government agencies include the Children's Action Plan (CAP) Directorate, the Ministries of Social Development, Education, Health and Justice, New Zealand Police and Department of Corrections. These core partner agencies are supported by Te Puni Kōkiri, the Ministries of Pacific Island Affairs and Business, Innovation and Employment, the Office of the Children's Commissioner and Superu.

Key CAP actions include:

- new legislation to better protect and respond to vulnerable children
- a new interagency way of working, both nationally and on the ground, so that children do not slip between the cracks and they and their families/whānau receive the services and support they need.

Improving results for vulnerable children and their families/whānau involves complex, cross-agency work programmes and significant change in practice at local and national levels. Although challenging at times, our shared determination to do better for New Zealand's vulnerable children has kept us all focused.

At the national level we are getting better at understanding the complexity of the work and providing the right support at the right time for Children's Teams.

At the local level, professionals and practitioners have worked hard to establish their own Children's Teams and get them running effectively. This has taken time, leadership and commitment.

We have made good progress since the first Children's Team was established two years ago. We can already see gains for children and their families/whānau in the established Children's Teams. We will start to get a much stronger picture of the results as the system moves past the establishment phase into business as usual.

This document recognises the efforts of all those involved in working with and for vulnerable children. It sets out what we intended to do when the CAP was first published in 2012, what we did, what we have learnt and what we will do next.



Children's Teams Principles and Values

**Take care of our children
Take care of what they hear
Take care of what they see
Take care of what they feel
For how the children grow
So will be the shape of Aotearoa
– Dame Whina Cooper**

Principles

The following principles will act as touch stones for the design and implementation of the Children's Action Plan.

The Children's Teams will:

- make sure that practices involving children and families/whānau are underpinned by rigorous evidence and informed by a child developmental perspective
- be appropriate and responsive for Māori children, families and whānau
- be culturally sensitive and responsive for children and families/whānau from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- share learning to continually improve practice and services
- build on what's working well in local sites
- focus on intervening early to prevent adverse outcomes and costs for children and society in the future
- work in an integrated way so that the needs of children, families/whānau and communities are met in a more seamless way and so that resources are used most effectively
- streamline information sharing and use of technology to enable better and early responses
- ensure everyone has the right information to make the right decisions about services to achieve the best results for the child
- simplify processes and service provision
- be jointly accountable for protecting and improving the wellbeing of children and young people
- ensure service delivery is community led and customised to suit local settings while enabling national consistency where needed
- achieve a high level of community and stakeholder buy-in
- signal changes in service needs in particular communities as early as possible
- use investment strategies that deliver best results and encourage collaborative approaches.

Values

To achieve the results we all want from the Children's Action Plan, we are committed to upholding the following values:

- work to ensure the child or young person is at the heart of what we do
- understand the child or young person's needs are within the context of the family/whānau and the community in which they live
- be open and honest with the children, young people and families/whānau that we work with
- listen to children, young people, their families/whānau and communities in helping to shape services
- continuously improve how we work
- make sure that we are all engaged together in the design and implementation of the Children's Action Plan
- be innovative and willing to change
- develop honest and trusting working relationships, and when there are differences be clear about why
- have mutually appropriate mechanisms for supporting professionals in their work
- make sure that all partner organisations are supported so that we can all contribute effectively.

Developing shared understandings together

- These principles and values were developed in a collaborative way at a cross-sector workshop at Te Papa, Wellington on 28 and 29 January 2014.
- Participants of the workshop represented a range of iwi, community-based professionals, medical and educational professionals and representatives of government departments who work in the area of vulnerable children.



Children at the centre

What we said we'd do

- Introduce a new Vulnerable Children's Bill which puts in place a child-centred approach and tough new laws to protect children.
- Ensure services for children and families/whānau are child-centred.

What we did

- Developed the Vulnerable Children's Bill as three separate Acts:

Vulnerable Children Act 2014:

- creates joint agency responsibility for getting results for vulnerable children
- requires all government-funded children's services to safety check their children's workers and have child protection policies in place that create a safe workforce for our children.⁵

Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Vulnerable Children) Amendment Act 2014:

- requires the *welfare and interests of the child be the first and paramount consideration* in all except youth justice matters (Section 6)
- amends the general care and protection principles in the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (CYPF Act) to ensure they are child-centred and all decisions serve the welfare and interests of the particular child concerned.

KiwiSaver (Vulnerable Children) Amendment Act 2014:

- allows the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development or an approved social service acting as guardian for a child under 16 to opt into, manage and make payments into the child's KiwiSaver account without needing the agreement of the child's other guardians.
- A child-centred approach has been embedded in principles, values and processes used by Children's Teams (see pages 8-9), Practice Foundations in the Operating Manual and Tuituia - the whole of child assessment framework.

What we learnt

- Sometimes administrative requests and complex systems and processes overshadow the desired focus on the interests of vulnerable children.
- Supporting family/whānau members to understand and address a child's needs requires responsive partnership relationships, especially between the Lead Professional and the family/whānau. It is important to understand that developing this requires time.
- Some organisations' concerns about sharing information and specific ethical beliefs mean that they are not always prioritising the interests of the child. This was raised as an issue in investigations into severe child abuse cases back in 2011, and is taking time to change.⁶

Child-centred, cross-agency approach

A mother seeking help for her nine-year old son was referred to a Children's Team. Her son was inattentive, disruptive and disobedient at home and school. After gathering information and assessing the child's needs with the family/whānau and professionals involved with the child, the Lead Professional found the boy had learning difficulties, there was rivalry and physical aggression among all the siblings, and the parents had significant marital conflict and were struggling to manage and appropriately discipline the children.

The Lead Professional set up a Child's Action Network with the family/whānau which included the school principal, teacher, Social Worker in School (SWIS), Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) and school nurse.

Immediate actions for the child involved:

- being placed in a reading programme (teacher)
- assistive technology and full auditory process assessments (RTLB)
- weekly home visits to help the parents with positive parenting strategies and general support (SWIS).

Nearly a year later, the child says he is worrying less and making a big effort to behave in the classroom. His teacher confirms he is learning responsibility. Auditory processing and assistive technology have helped with his learning difficulties.

The child's aggression towards his siblings has decreased significantly. The parents have separated but are working well together, compared to months earlier. The father is spending quality time with his son and they are building models together. The mother has established supportive household routines but needs on-going support developing discipline strategies.

The child is now living in a safe environment. This means a statutory response is not and will not be required if the parents continue to work together, no longer resort to violence, and have support available in the community.

What's next

2016/17: Building a safe, capable workforce

- Amendments to the CYPF Act 1989 come into force on 1 July 2016.
- Children's Teams and agencies continue to support the children's workforce to build capability so children are placed at the centre of all practice and their welfare and interests are the first and paramount consideration.
- Agencies and organisations implement the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and associated safety checking regulations within and across their workforces:
 - 1 July 2015 - all new core workers safety checked before starting work in a new role
 - 1 July 2016 - all new non-core workers safety checked before commencing employment
 - 1 July 2018 - all existing core workers safety checked before continuing employment
 - 1 July 2019 - all existing non-core workers safety checked before continuing employment.

Working together, sharing the responsibility

What we said we'd do

- Establish local, trans-disciplinary Children's Teams.
- Chief Executives of the Ministries of Social Development, Health, Education, Justice and New Zealand Police to be jointly accountable for achieving results for vulnerable children.

What we did

Established local trans-disciplinary Children's Teams

- In 2013, communities in Rotorua and Whangarei established the first Children's Teams as 'demonstration sites.'
- In 2014, Horowhenua/Ōtaki and Marlborough communities established their Children's Teams.
- In 2015, five more Children's Teams went live in Hamilton, Tairāwhiti, Eastern Bay of Plenty, Whanganui and Canterbury.
- A Children's Team in Counties Manukau is due to go live in March 2016.
- To the end of October 2015, 687 children and their families/whānau have been referred to Children's Teams. The Children's Teams are currently working with 372 children and their families/whānau.

Gateway Assessments – Taking responsibility

Gateway Assessments provide a comprehensive cross-sector assessment for children and young people who have come to the attention of Child, Youth and Family. The Gateway assessment helps build a complete picture of unmet needs and ensures access to the right health, education, and social services. The Ministry of Education works alongside CYF and District Health Boards to assess over 150 education and health related needs for each child and help them get on the path to better outcomes.

In 2014, it was identified that children who are not enrolled in early childhood education or school (e.g. home-schooled) could not access Gateway Assessments. The Ministry of Education took responsibility for the education needs of these vulnerable children and expanded its provision so these children and young people have access to the same assistance as children enrolled in early childhood education or school.

Established local cross-agency governance

- Local Governance Groups (LGG), comprising community leaders and local agencies, came together in each site to support the establishment and operation of their local Children's Team. All LGGs govern the operation of the Children's Team and are responsible for ensuring that their Children's Teams have what they need to work with vulnerable children and their families/whānau.

Established national cross-agency governance

- National level governance was established to provide a unified approach to vulnerable children with shared oversight, monitoring and accountability across agencies.
- National governance includes the Lead Minister (Minister for Social Development) supported by:
 - A Ministerial Oversight Group comprising the Ministers for Social Development (Chair), Finance, Health, Education, Justice, Police, Corrections, and Whānau Ora
 - A Vulnerable Children's Board (VCB) comprising Chief Executives of the Ministries of Social Development (Chair), Education, Health, Justice; the Department of Corrections; Te Puni Kōkiri; and the Commissioner of New Zealand Police.
- In July 2015, Cabinet agreed to widen the mandate of the VCB so it is also accountable for the Social Sector Trials and the Child Sex Offender Register.

Established the Children's Action Plan Directorate

- The Directorate provides oversight for national coordination. It is staffed and supported by the partner agencies and non-government organisations and provides support and resources for agencies and organisations to implement the CAP. It is led by a National Children's Director who is responsible to the VCB.

Built connections between Children's Teams and CYF

- Children's Teams are intended to complement and support CYF.
- To date, just under half of all referrals to Children's Teams come from CYF. These children have complex, multiple issues but do not require a statutory response.
- The Office of the Children's Commissioner Review [State of Care 2015](#) (page 16) found that most CYF sites were 'ready to work with the new Children's Teams, suggesting strong intake and assessment processes.'

What we learnt

Establishing a Children's Team

- After evaluating what we had learnt about establishing Children's Teams, we realised that:
 - the 'go-live' of a Children's Team has two stages that need different kinds of support:
 - Stage 1 Establishing the LGG and appointing the Children's Team Director and engaging with the local community
 - Stage 2 Establishing and training the Children's Team members and beginning to accept referrals
 - communities benefit from earlier capability building, workforce training and relationship management to help them prepare for referrals and stakeholder engagement
 - more intensive support after the 'go-live' is also helpful.

This knowledge led to a revised implementation approach in 2014 which builds capability earlier and provides more support after implementation.

- LGGs can sometimes find it difficult to secure the resources and commitment of local agencies and organisations to support the Children's Teams.
- The VCB has now clarified the mandate of LGGs to ensure their Children's Teams have sufficient resources and capability to operate effectively.

Inter-agency work

- Working across agencies has proved challenging both nationally and locally.
- At the local level, results for children depend on strong, enduring and practical relationships. Building and embedding those relationships and teamwork takes time and effort.
- In particular, children's workers come from different professional and practice backgrounds, making establishing shared understandings and approaches challenging at times.
- At the national level we have also had to establish new ways to work together without creating unnecessary bureaucracy. This is still a challenge.

Balance of central/local direction

- A nationally-supported, locally-led initiative has proved difficult to manage at times for both local and national level managers.
- Local Children's Teams need to work in ways that suit local circumstances. This is important not only to achieve better results but also to gain stakeholder support.
- However, a degree of national direction is also required to make sure the Children's Team model is implemented consistently and information from each Team can be collated to get an overall picture. This limits the amount of local autonomy possible.
- The devolved nature of the education and health systems needs to be considered when designing nationally-led changes to ensure they can be implemented locally to achieve real outcomes.
- Work is continuing to find the best balance between central direction and local responsiveness.

Safety checking – A cross-agency response

With the support of the Social Sector Board Deputy Chief Executives, the Children's Action Plan Directorate has coordinated a cross-sector implementation plan that includes the appointment of national safety checking 'champions' within each agency. These are in turn connected to local champions from each agency at each Children's Team site.

Together, these form a network that provides support to Children's Teams and local stakeholders to accelerate implementation of the new requirements. This integrated, cross-agency response has been key to meeting our commitment to a fully safety-checked Children's Team workforce.

What's next

2016: Backing an effective Children's Team approach

- The Directorate is rolling out the new Service and Resource Change Process that supports the LGG to secure sufficient Lead Professionals for each site.
- The Directorate and agencies continue to support the Children's Teams with workforce action planning and capability building to develop a safe and competent children's workforce, with a focus on long term, sustainable change.
- The Directorate will continue to work with the Ministry of Social Development's Community Investment to ensure its contracts support service providers to engage with Children's Teams.



Finding, checking and connecting

What we said we'd do

- Find, assess and connect the most vulnerable children to services earlier and better.
- Create a secure information system for vulnerable children supported by a legal framework and willingness to share information.

What we did

- Implemented Phase 1 of the Vulnerable Kids Information System (ViKi) in Hamilton on 16 November 2015.
- Began a proof of concept of the Vulnerable Children's Hub (The Hub) in Hamilton from 1 September 2015.
- Developed an Approved Information Sharing Agreement (AISA) which was signed by the partner agencies for use in The Hub.
- Undertook work on information sharing with the Privacy Commissioner, Government Chief Privacy Officer, the Ministry of Justice and the Chief Legal Advisers of the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Development and Justice and New Zealand Police.
- Developed guidelines to explain the rules around information sharing for Children's Teams with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.
- Identified unmet needs of vulnerable children and their families/whānau in Children's Teams and connected them with new services. The top five new services provided include:
 - Counselling/Therapy 31%
 - GP/medical facility 28%
 - Personal Development/Guidance 28%
 - Work and Income 17%
 - Budgeting Advice 17%.



What we learnt

Change of culture for change of practice

- Change can be difficult and challenging, but change based on best practice and evidence is essential if we are to get better results for our vulnerable children. The leadership of committed professionals and practitioners has been essential in promoting best practice in the workforce.
- Some of the hardest barriers to shift are not structural but attitudinal and behavioural. For example, some current concerns about information sharing indicate some agencies still do not feel confident to share information about vulnerable children.
- Achieving this will take time and require significant commitment and leadership from all agencies, NGOs, LGGs and communities.

What's next

2016: Improving the system supports for Children's Teams

- Children's Teams will work with the [information sharing framework and guidelines](#) to support their practice. How well this works will be monitored locally and nationally.
- The Directorate will continue working with agencies, service providers, professionals and practitioners to build an understanding of what personal information can be disclosed, to whom and for what purpose.
- The Directorate will work with the Ministry of Justice, Government Chief Privacy Officer and Office of the Privacy Commissioner to monitor the AISA and information sharing at the local level.
- The VCB has extended the pilot of ViKI and The Hub to the new Children's Team in Canterbury and will also extend it to Counties Manukau when they go live.
- The Directorate will analyse the outcomes of the ViKI pilot and The Hub proof of concept and use those to support their roll out to the other Children's Teams.
- The Directorate and agencies will develop a business case for further development of ViKI.

2017

- The Directorate and relevant agencies will work to report on the operation of the AISA, required under sections 96S to 96U of the Privacy Act 2020.



Focusing on what works

What we said we'd do

- Fund only those programmes and services that make a difference, based on evidence.
- Use and build on evidence of what works to improve results for vulnerable children and fund best practice services.

What we did

- In April 2014, Superu published:
 - the *Assessment of the Design and Implementation of the Children's Teams to January 2014* to inform the development of the new Children's Teams
 - a report *Effective Parenting Programmes* that reviews government-funded parenting programmes to identify what works best.
- In 2014, partner agencies developed the [Vulnerable Children's Outcomes Framework](#) as a common basis for identifying and monitoring outcomes across all agencies' work to support vulnerable children.
- In June 2015, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) published the *Community Investment Strategy* which sets out how it will invest in social services for vulnerable New Zealanders over the next three years.
- In August 2015, the Directorate convened a group of measurement experts to advise on measuring results for children and evaluating the effectiveness of the Children's Teams.
- An evaluation framework for the CAP system was developed by Superu with agencies to define activities that can be evaluated to measure their impact and value.
- VCB commissioned a cost effectiveness review of the operation of Children's Teams.
- In November 2015, the CAP Directorate began a survey of the attitudes, experiences and skills of the wider children's workforce to build our understanding of their challenges and capabilities.

What we learnt

- Identifying what works best for vulnerable children and their families/whānau requires evidence about results.
- We realised while many children's workers and organisations were already using best practice models, others did not identify results for vulnerable children or their families/whānau.
- This is one of the reasons why it has been so hard for Government to identify what works best.
- This also meant introducing the whole of child assessment (Tuituia) was more challenging than expected and required greater support for implementation.



Building the evidence – Learning as we go

The implementation of Children's Teams is providing an opportunity to build the evidence about what works best. In 2014, the CAP Directorate commissioned Superu to evaluate the Children's Team demonstration sites (established in Rotorua and Whangarei in 2013) to inform the establishment and implementation of further teams. The evaluation identified that:

- the 'go-live' of a Children's Team is in fact a two stage process, establishing the Local Governance Group (LGG) and appointing the Children's Team Director, followed by establishing and training the Children's Team members
- communities benefit from earlier capability building and workforce training as well as relationship management to help them prepare for referrals and stakeholder engagement
- more intensive support is helpful after the teams are launched.

Children's Team Directors also report monthly on their operations. These reports and the Superu evaluation made it clear we needed to steady the pace and change some processes in order to make sure we get it right. This led to a revised implementation approach which built capability earlier and provided more support after implementation.

While the operations of Children's Teams will continue to be evaluated to inform continual improvement, we are now shifting to an outcomes focus that looks at the extent to which the Children's Teams are getting results for children.

What's next

2016: Measuring and analysing results (see Measuring Results page 32)

- Children's workers will continue to build confidence and capability in using the whole of child assessment to measure children's level of need and track their progress. This will be supported by the new Quality Assurance and Evaluation role in the Directorate.
- The Directorate will undertake further work on aggregating children's results and tracking them across time, including after a child has exited the Children's Team.
- The Directorate will progress evaluations of components of the CAP, including seeking the child's voice and examining the cultural responsiveness of the approach.
- A sample-based study will be commissioned to identify the impact of the Children's Team approach on a sample of families/whānau.

2017: Identifying system level impact

- An evaluation will be commissioned that uses national level administrative data to identify what difference Children's Teams have made in their communities.

Protect and respond

What we said we'd do

- Achieve better results for children in care.
- Develop and implement a new cross-agency approach (with Ministries of Social Development, Health and Education and NGOs) to improve the outcomes for children in care, and support for children and young people transitioning from care.

What we did

- On 1 July 2014, amendments to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families (CYPF) Act were made to provide better support for children and young people in care and their caregivers, including safe and stable permanent care for children who have been removed from their parents. These come into effect from 1 July 2016.
- From April 2016, parental leave entitlements will be extended to 'primary carers,' such as Home for Life parents.
- CYF worked with agencies across the sector including the Ministries of Health and Education, NGOs and iwi to develop the first steps to a *Multi-Agency Strategy for Children and Young People in Care*. Implementation of parts of the strategy is underway, while other parts have been overtaken by the Minister for Social Development's appointment of the Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) on modernising CYF. EAP is due to report to the Minister by the end of 2015.

What we learnt

- CYF has found it is really important to invest time and effort in developing strong partnerships with iwi to help improve outcomes for Māori children in care and provide support to Māori caregivers. CYF are committed to further nurturing these relationships going forward.
- While the legislative changes provide the platform to enhance service delivery and results for children in care, we know the views of caregivers and mokopuna in care will be central to future service design.

What's next

2016: Implementing the Expert Advisory Panel's recommendations and the new legislation

- The recommendations of the Expert Advisory Panel on modernising CYF will shape future work to protect and respond to vulnerable children.
- CYF, together with its iwi partners, is currently co-designing services that will support both the cultural and support needs of Māori mokopuna and whānau who come into contact with CYF.
- Iwi partners are particularly focused on the re-connection of mokopuna with their wider whānau, hapū and iwi to broaden options for the provision of care and support services for mokopuna as early as possible within the current statutory system.
- CYF is leading implementation of the amendments to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989, which will come into effect on 1 July 2016. These amendments are:
 - new requirements to ensure the safety of subsequent children
 - a range of measures designed to strengthen Family Group Conferences
 - a new Special Guardianship Order that will strengthen permanent care arrangements for mokopuna leaving care
 - new obligations to provide financial and other assistance to permanent caregivers
 - strengthening the content of Court plans
 - new obligations to provide advice, support and financial assistance to young people leaving care to independence from 15 to 20 years of age.



Professionals helping children

What we said we'd do

- Provide a safe and competent children's workforce that takes a child-centred approach.
- Introduce new obligations for vetting and screening processes and set minimum standards and core competencies for those working with children.

What we did

- A new requirement for standard safety checking of government funded children's workers was introduced through the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
- Agencies and organisations have been working to implement the new safety checking regulations which came into effect in July 2015. Service providers are also developing child protection policies to identify and respond to vulnerability.
- The Ministry of Justice and New Zealand Police have worked together to put in place an enhanced vetting system which allows timely, thorough Police vets for children's workers as part of a safety check.
- The Children's Team model led to the establishment of new roles and working relationships. New roles included Children's Team Directors, Local Governance Groups, Lead Professionals and the Vulnerable Children's Hub (The Hub). New working relationships included Children's Teams and Child's Action Networks (see Glossary for definitions).
- The Directorate, with partner agencies, has developed a range of supporting materials and guidelines to help the workforce meet the new requirements and improve effectiveness.
- To implement these requirements and strengthen practice across the children's workforce, the Directorate has partnered a provider consortium to build workforce capability at Children's Team sites.
- In addition, the Directorate has appointed new local Workforce Leads to motivate change and mobilise local expertise.



What we learnt

The importance of a family/whānau focus

- Supporting a child-centred approach often means helping parents to support their children's wellbeing.
- This can mean addressing the unmet needs of the adults in the family/whānau as well as those of the child, for example, employment, mental health services, drug and alcohol counselling, budgeting advice, family violence and parenting programmes.

Workforce readiness

- The capability, appropriateness and responsiveness of the people working with a vulnerable child are key to getting results for the child and their family/whānau.

- The Children's Action Plan is the first time that all people who work with children have been brought together as a single workforce. Previously, the different parts of the sector all had their own ways of working which has meant that the 'children's workforce' is fragmented and uncoordinated.
- To work effectively together, people working in and with Children's Teams have needed to develop a common language and understandings to bring together their different practice approaches.
- The capability requirements identified by Children's Teams have enabled us to prioritise workforce development opportunities. This has enhanced inter-agency collaboration and stakeholder engagement, and generated insights for the national programme of work.
- Building capability in the wider workforce so they can work in and with Children's Teams as they grow to scale will be a significant challenge.

Supply of personnel

- Securing Lead Professionals for Children's Teams has been more challenging than expected and, until recently, has had a negative impact on the ability of Children's Teams to accept referrals.
- This is because organisations have been concerned that, if they contribute a Lead Professional, their own service capacity will not be sufficient to fulfill their commitments under their contracts for services.
- What some Lead Professionals have found, however, is that they continue to do their job for that child anyway, just in a different way and with additional resources.
- To ensure there are sufficient Lead Professionals, the Directorate has introduced a new Service and Resource Change Process. This was trialed successfully in Hamilton and is now being rolled out to other Children's Teams.
- Local Governance Groups have taken stronger steps to secure Lead Professionals for their teams.
- The Directorate is working with MSD Community Investment to ensure Government's investment in service providers prioritises and facilitates support for Children's Teams.

What's next

2016: Building workforce capability, practice, and confidence

- Children's Team Directors will continue to work with the Directorate and contracted providers to support them to build a safe and competent local children's workforce.
- The Directorate and partner agencies are developing a national core-competency framework in partnership with experts and representatives of the children's workforce to provide consistency in standards and practice and to embed the practice changes required to get better results for children.
- The Directorate will publish a *Working with Children Code of Practice* to provide a more 'hands on' guide for children's workers to support them to understand their roles and responsibilities when they are working with vulnerable children.
- The Directorate is working with partner agencies and NGOs to review the workforce processes and tools so they are easy to use and reflect the diversity of the workforce.

2017-19: Completing safety-checking

- All paid government-funded children's workers (approximately 280,000 people) need to be safety checked by their employers by mid-2019 unless they are employed by local government, which must complete the safety checking by mid-2021.

Dealing with abusers

What we said we'd do

- Develop mechanisms to stop abusers working with children, and provide safe care for children who have been removed from their parents.
- Introduce legislation to restrict people, in the home and at work, who pose an undue risk to the safety of children from living or associating with children, and to provide the right arrangements for safe care of children.

What we did

- The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) led work to amend the Children, Young Persons and Their Families (CYPF) Act 1989.
- Special guardianship orders were included in amendments to the CYPF Act and passed on 1 July 2014. These provided for safe and stable permanent care for children who have been removed from their parents.
- Other Government actions that contributed to this action included strengthening the disciplinary framework for teachers, removing the time limit on Extended Supervision Orders for child sex offenders and the introduction of Public Protection Orders.
- Amendments to the CYPF Act will be introduced in July 2016. These provisions will strengthen the guidance on and oversight of cases involving people who meet the criteria (see box on page 25).
- The initial development of child harm prevention orders (restricting people who pose a high risk to children from living or associating with children) did not progress because of concerns raised by some public submissions, the cost of implementing the new orders and questions about the need for such orders given the introduction of other new Government actions.
- Instead, Government developed the Child Sex Offender Register. This requires all registered offenders, when residing in the community, to provide a range of personal information to a central register administered by the New Zealand Police. The registered offender must update the information annually, within 72 hours of any change of details, and at least 48 hours prior to travel. This information enables the Police and the Department of Corrections to assess and manage the risk to public safety posed by known child sex offenders living in the community.



Ensuring the safety of subsequent children

The new provisions in the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act strengthen the guidance on and oversight of cases involving parents who have previously:

- had a child removed from their care due to abuse or neglect and who are unlikely to return home OR
- been convicted of the murder, manslaughter or infanticide of a child in their care AND
- go on to have another child.

The onus will be on these parents to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family and the Family Court that they are safe to parent the subsequent child.

Unless they are able to demonstrate this, the child or young person will be presumed to be in need of care or protection.

What we learnt

- Evidence shows that past behaviour is often a good predictor of future behaviour. There is significant risk of harm to children born to parents who have had children previously removed due to abuse or neglect (who are unlikely to have those children returned to their care), or who have been convicted of the murder, manslaughter or infanticide of a previous child.

What's next?

2016: Implementing new legislation

- New protections for children will come into force through the 2014 amendments to the CYPF Act.



Mentoring and supporting

What we said we'd do

- Encourage individuals, corporates and other groups to step up and help vulnerable children.
- Encourage individuals to volunteer to mentor vulnerable children, and encourage individuals, corporates and other groups to contribute to scholarships for vulnerable children.

What we did

- The Ministry of Health took leadership in strengthening strategic relationships between government social sector agencies and philanthropic organisations and improving access to existing scholarships and grants.
- Social sector agencies met with philanthropic organisations to increase collaboration and information sharing between the philanthropic sector and government to better support vulnerable children. We supported practical opportunities to build linkages between philanthropic organisations, Children's Teams and other initiatives that support vulnerable children. We also progressed actions to improve access for Children's Team families/whānau to online scholarships and grants.
- The Ministry developed Safe Practice Guidelines for Youth Mentoring Programmes. A number of youth mentoring programmes completed a self-assessment and review process and were promoted on the New Zealand Youth Mentoring Network (NZYMN) site. In 2015, NZYMN led the development of a revised Guide to Effective Youth Mentoring Practice in New Zealand incorporating the [Safe Practice Guidelines](#).

What we learnt

- Many philanthropic organisations contribute significantly to supporting vulnerable children in New Zealand and have a wealth of experience and local knowledge to contribute. There are significant opportunities to work together more effectively by sharing information and learnings, and collaborating for common outcomes.
- There are a large number of organisations and individuals providing mentoring in New Zealand. Mentoring that is underpinned by core principles of safe and effective practice is critical in ensuring its value. A single consistent guide to safe and effective youth mentoring practice, developed with the wider youth mentoring sector is important for effective delivery.

New Zealand Youth Mentoring Network

“Do not look at the wrinkles on our faces, think of the wisdom in our heads.”

Mentor, One Tree Hill College

Mentoring is not about saving or rescuing young people, nor about ‘fixing’ their families, prescribing ways they should live or behave, funding their lifestyle or trying to be a ‘cool peer.’

Mentors are caring individuals who move alongside young people to encourage them to reach their unique potential. These young people feel unconditionally cared for and valued in structured and trusting relationships, while their lives gain meaning and purpose.

For more information go to http://www.youthmentoring.org.nz/being_a_mentor/index.cfm#

What's next

2016:

- Continue to develop strategic relationships between government social sector agencies and philanthropic organisations.
- Support Children's Teams and other initiatives supporting vulnerable children to collaborate with philanthropic organisations, businesses, and other funders.
- The Ministry of Health will continue to improve access to the existing range of scholarships and grants for children accessing Children's Teams.
- The Ministry will promote safe and effective mentoring guidance to Children's Teams, and will explore broader community mentoring and support opportunities for vulnerable children.
- The Ministry will explore mechanisms to enable contributions to the Kiwi Saver accounts of children in care.



When agencies get it wrong

What we said we'd do

- Ensure a robust and fair Child, Youth and Family (CYF) complaints system.
- Commission an independent review of complaints processes relating to CYF.

What we did

- In 2013, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) commissioned an independent review of the existing CYF complaints processes. The Howard Broad Review of the CYF Complaints System was released by the then Minister for Social Development in September 2013.
- MSD has begun the development of a Ministry-wide complaints management strategy. The Broad Review has been taken into account in the development of this strategy.

What we learnt

- The Expert Advisory Panel on modernising CYF is currently considering a range of issues for the future operating model.

What's next

2016: Implementing the Expert Advisory Panel's recommendations

- The new operating model for CYF, due to be presented by the Expert Advisory Panel to the Minister for Social Development in December 2015, will include a complaints system.



Whaia Te Maramatanga

All of Child, Youth and Family's eight residences must provide access to a grievance procedure which is a legislative requirement.

Feedback from young people in the residences told us the forms were too complicated and the text used reflected adult requirements and did not help them understand the process.

We worked with the young people to design a new complaints procedure that was more child-friendly. This included a national competition across all residences to re-name the grievance process.

The winning entry was *Whaia Te Maramatanga – Seeking Enlightenment*. The use of the pumona (shell) in the centre of the design represented young people's voices. The young people believed they often go through life unheard and people, especially adults or the professionals working with them, 'hear' what they say but do not 'listen' to what they are saying.

We now have child-friendly documentation, including a new suggestion and feedback option instead of only a complaints option. The new forms are colourful and vibrant. They also focus on using language that young people understand, such as 'getting it sorted.'

'That's our goal, we want to help mokopuna to have a voice and get things sorted.'

Whaia Te Maramatanga & Te Roopu Kai Tautoko, 26 August 2015

Reporting child abuse

What we said we'd do

- Act early to protect children.
- Better reporting, easier ways to raise concerns, clarity on society's expectations of parents and advice on how to spot child abuse and neglect.

What we did

- Part 2 of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 requires all agencies and organisations working with children to have policies and reporting systems in place to recognise and report child abuse and neglect.
- The Directorate and partner agencies have developed [guidelines](#) to help agencies and organisations do this.
- The Vulnerable Children's Hub (The Hub), currently being implemented with the Hamilton Children's Team, will provide a way for people to report concerns about a child that they do not think are serious enough for CYF.

What did not happen

- The national public awareness initiative included in the 2012 Children's Action Plan (CAP) was deferred until enough Children's Teams were established across the country to respond to the call to action that the campaign would generate.
- Ministers will reconsider the appropriateness of a public awareness campaign in 2016/17 when The Hub and more Children's Teams are available to meet the likely increased demand.

What we learnt

- Work to implement The Hub and establish Children's Teams has encountered problems with professionals' and practitioners' willingness to share information and act to protect or help a vulnerable child when consent has not been given to share their personal information.
- It is quite clear information sharing about vulnerable children is allowed under the Privacy Act 2020. However the CAP Directorate and agencies continue to need to work together to ensure everyone understands this and has the confidence to report and act on suspected abuse or neglect even when their parents/caregivers do not consent.

The importance of information sharing

The report of the Experts' Forum on Child Abuse noted that practitioners often have only partial information about a child's circumstances, and this impedes practitioners' ability to make informed decisions about a child's safety. Reviews of child deaths also highlight how vulnerable children can fall through the gaps when information about them is not shared.

A 2011 inquiry into the serious abuse of a child argued that "the sharing of information and dialogue between the holders of information is a critical, if not the most critical, component of multi-agency and inter-professional liaison and cooperation."

The Privacy Act allows for information to be shared without consent if it is to prevent or lessen a serious threat. The Privacy Commissioner has said that:

"there is little that is more serious and imminent than the need to protect a child."⁷

Privacy Commissioner, 2011

What's next

2016: Building workforce capability, practice and confidence

- The Directorate, Children's Teams and agencies will:
 - continue to build workforce capability to identify child abuse, including training agencies working with children to develop and implement a safe and effective child protection policy
 - continue to build understanding about information sharing
 - continue to build willingness to share information and act to address a serious threat to a child, if necessary, without consent to share personal information
 - build on the platform created by child protection policies through the aligned development of national core competencies and the Children's Worker Code of Practice.



Measuring results for children

Vulnerable Children's Outcomes Framework

- In 2014, an interagency group developed a framework identifying outcomes for vulnerable children across all areas of their wellbeing as set out in the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.
- The [Outcomes Framework](#) was intended to focus the work of all children's agencies on contributing to achieving and monitoring a single set of outcomes for vulnerable children. This framework provides the basis for measuring results for children engaged with Children's Teams.

Reporting on results

- Lead Professionals assess children's wellbeing at entry, exit and at points during their engagement with a Children's Team by using a whole of child assessment called Tuituia. This provides comprehensive information (including the child's perspective) they can use to identify and monitor a child's progress.
- The results can also be aggregated to identify overall changes. A group of measurement experts has been providing the Directorate with advice on aggregating and reporting results for population groups (e.g. age groups, gender, ethnicity).
- The results for a group of children can also be aggregated across all areas of the Tuituia assessment to provide an overall wellbeing index and we can identify 'effect sizes' which measure the amount of change that has occurred between entry and exit.

Measuring the effectiveness of Children's Teams

- In addition to reporting on results from the Tuituia assessment, the Directorate has worked with Superu, Ministry of Social Development (Insights MSD) and the group of measurement experts to develop an approach to evaluating the effectiveness of Children's Teams that includes:
 - a sample-based study to investigate results for children and impacts on others in more detail, for example, cultural responsiveness and the effectiveness of the interagency approach
 - a post-exit study identifying the sustainability of results for children and their families/whānau
 - a brief survey to identify client satisfaction (child, family/whānau)
 - a comparative analysis of administrative data comparing communities with Children's Teams and those without.
- These evaluations will form part of an overall evaluation of the CAP.

Evaluating the Children's Action Plan

- The government evaluation agency, Superu, has been working with partner agencies to develop an overall evaluation strategy for the CAP.
- The strategy incorporates a range of activities evaluating different aspects of the CAP. This will enable us to identify the effectiveness of different components of the CAP and help us decide where best to invest or stop investing.
- The strategy can also accommodate a wider system approach by bringing together findings from other evaluative activity across the social sector. This means it can accommodate the wider range of activity that will result from the new *Vulnerable Children's Plan* being developed in 2016.
- It could also potentially include activities resulting from the Expert Advisory Panel's recommendations for modernising Child, Youth and Family (CYF).
- The evaluation strategy will culminate in an overall evaluation that brings together all the evaluation findings to date and will draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the CAP and where change may be required.

System change - What's next?

Investing in vulnerable children

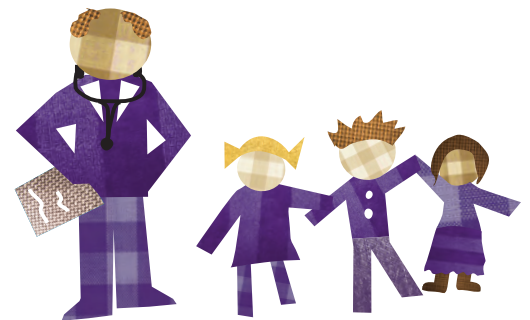
- In order to do more for children at-risk of having poor life outcomes, Ministers are taking a social investment approach to 'at-risk' families/whānau with children aged 0-5 years, within the wider 0-24 years priority group. The Youth Funding Review also focuses on investing to get better outcomes for youth aged 15-24.
- Children's Teams contribute to the social investment approach by identifying and targeting services to vulnerable children and their families/whānau.
- The interim report from the Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) on modernising Child, Youth and Family (CYF) envisages Children's Teams complementing CYF's focus on children who require statutory interventions. Investing in Children's Teams could reduce pressure on CYF:
 - as Children's Teams take responsibility for those children currently receiving support from CYF but who do not need statutory intervention (currently CYF's differential response); and
 - through their preventative investment approach that supports children and their families/whānau before their issues escalate.

Mobilising the workforce

- The children's workforce for Children's Teams is the same for all the child-focused initiatives across the different sectors and includes more than 370,000 paid practitioners and volunteers.
- This means the CAP work to unite and build the capability of the children's workforce benefits all work with children and potentially improves results for children in all areas.

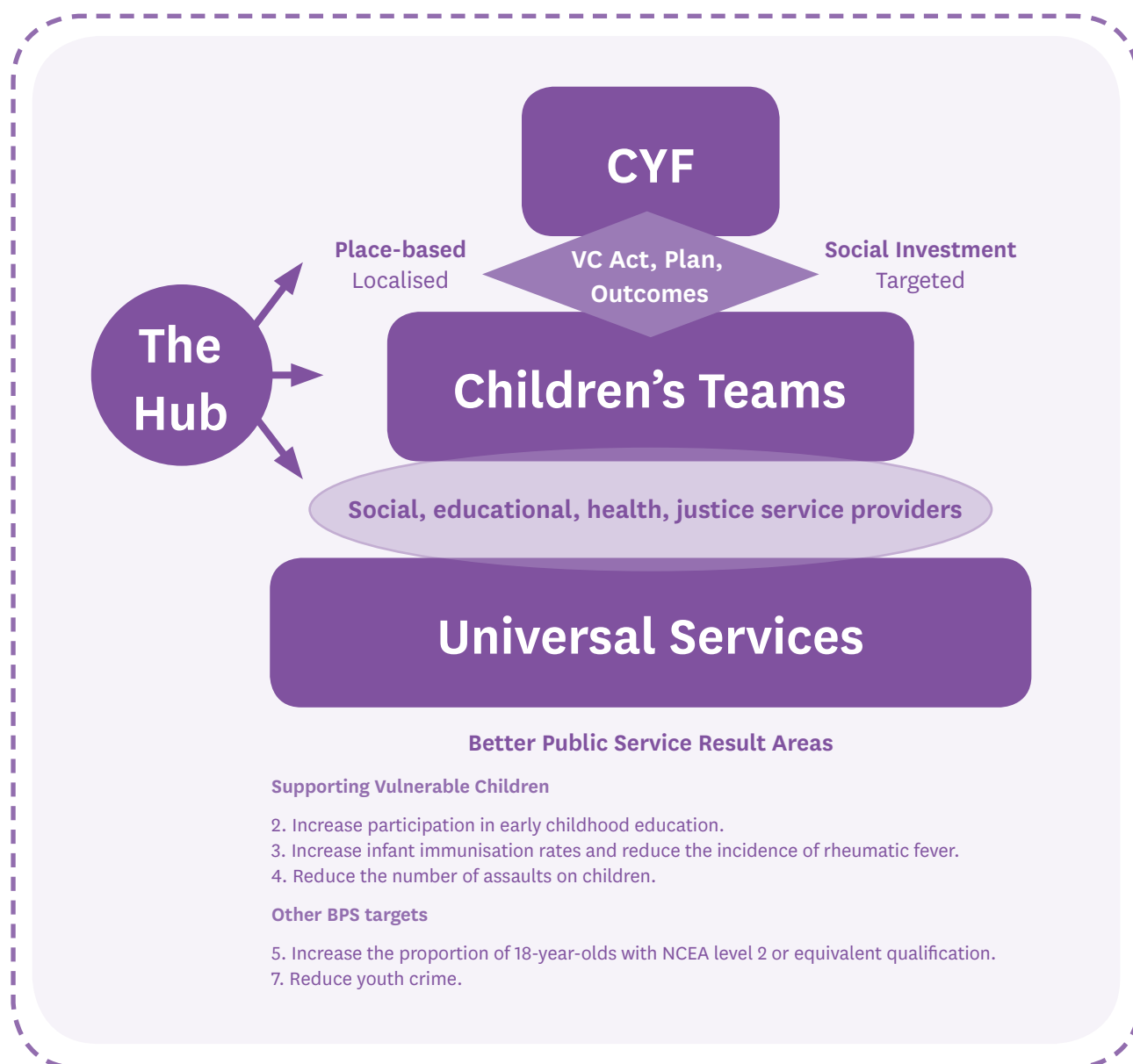
Linking existing initiatives

- The place of Children's Teams amongst other multi-agency work programmes supporting vulnerable children is becoming clearer as the teams become more established.
- Since Children's Teams bring local services together around a child, they focus the programmes in their communities on addressing the needs of the vulnerable children as a priority group. Children's Teams are therefore making the most of Government's investment in existing social services.
- They are also a forerunner of the new place-based approach to the delivery of social services for vulnerable populations, and well-positioned to support this approach.
- Whānau Ora Navigators are starting to work as Lead Professionals in Children's Teams, providing a culturally responsive approach for Māori and Pacific children and families/whānau.
- The Horowhenua/Ōtaki community is exploring how to better link the governance of Children's Teams and the Social Sector Trial (SST)⁸ through quarterly joint meetings. This aims to ensure the wider community focus of the SST supports the more targeted focus of Children's Teams, and vice versa. It also potentially enables shared decision-making in relation to the role of each programme's role.
- Lead Professionals can also use programmes contracted by initiatives such as Strategies for Kids Information for Parents (SKIP) to meet the needs of children and their families/whānau.
- The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is looking at ways to reshape their contracts with service providers to focus them more on supporting Children's Teams.
- Data from the Vulnerable Kids Information System (ViKi) will feed into cross-sector databases, for example, Statistics New Zealand's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). Over time, and with further investment, information from ViKi could also become available to individual agency systems.



A coherent system for vulnerable children

- The recommendations of the Expert Advisory Panel and development of a new *Vulnerable Children's Plan* in 2016 will provide an opportunity to consider how to bring the initiatives together in an effective system that is focused on getting better results for vulnerable children.
- The new *Vulnerable Children's Plan* will present a coherent action plan for CYF, the CAP Directorate and other children's agencies, and will outline:
 - greater detail about how agencies intend to respond to the direction set by the Expert Advisory Panel and other key reports such as the report from the Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence
 - how Chief Executives will work together as a unified sector and ensure the wider care and protection system (health, education, social development) functions effectively to prevent maltreatment and support vulnerable children
 - how activity will be monitored and progress measured.



End notes

- ¹ Office of the Children’s Commissioner. (2015). State of Care 2015: What we learnt from monitoring Child, Youth and Family. <http://www.occ.org.nz/state-of-care>
- ² Insights MSD 22/01/2015. The figures are based on linked administrative data from Work and Income and CYF including benefit circumstances of a child’s caregiver and information on the history of the child, their caregivers and any siblings, collected across both Work and Income and CYF. They should not be interpreted as forecasts of specific demand as they rely on assumptions that will not reflect the eventual operational implementation of the Children’s Teams. The counts represent young people aged 0-15 who are “at-risk” of having a substantiated finding of maltreatment (physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect) in the following 2 years. Excluded from the count are young people with a prior Care and Protection Family Group Conference or a care episode, on the basis that these people would already be known to CYF
- ³ White Paper for Vulnerable Children 2012
- ⁴ Modernising Child, Youth and Family: Expert panel: Interim report. 31 July 2015 <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/cyf-modernisation/index.html#InterimReportoftheExpertPanelModernisingChildYouthandFamily1>
- ⁵ Safer Organisations, Safer Children is available on www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz
- ⁶ http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Smith_report.pdf
- ⁷ <http://privacy.org.nz/privacy-commissioner-statement-on-nia-glassie-case/>
- ⁸ Social Sector Trials (SSTs) focus on achieving better outcomes for target groups (most commonly children and young people)

Glossary

Approved Information Sharing Agreement (AISA)

The Privacy Act 2020 allows for the making of Approved Information Sharing Agreements (AISAs). These modify the Privacy Principles in the Act so that parties to the AISA can legally share personal information about others without their consent for specific purposes, in this case, in order to help vulnerable children.

An AISA has been established for the Vulnerable Children's Hub (currently in Hamilton only) to clarify information sharing for government agencies.

The parties to the CAP AISA are the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Development, Justice, New Zealand Police and the Children's Action Plan Directorate.

Child-centred

A child-centred, family/whānau focused approach includes a:

- primary focus on children's physical, emotional, cognitive and socio/cultural needs, taking account of their views on themselves, their lives, their future, their family/whānau and community
 - developmental perspective using age-appropriate engagement and communication, assessment and actions within each child's family/whānau cultural context
 - focus on family/whānau as the child's primary support system, and work together in partnership, where appropriate, at all points of contact with services
 - focus on community support networks in understanding the importance of connections between children, their family/whānau and their community
 - focus on children's rights, advocating to maintain a safe environment and provide active support to children and their families/whānau
 - commitment to urgency when responding to children's needs and persistence to achieve outcomes.
-

Child's Action Network (CAN)

The children's workers providing services to the child and their family/whānau established by the Lead Professional to develop and action the Child's Plan.

CAN members who are named in the Plan and have access to shared information on the child and their family/whānau are safety checked prior to becoming involved.

This group is fluid, co-ordinated by the Lead Professional depending on the needs and progress of the child. It may never actually meet in person although the members are expected to share information and their knowledge with the others.

Child's Plan

A Child's Plan is a single plan developed by the child's Lead Professional with the Child's Action Network, the child and members of their family/whānau that sets out what needs to happen to address the child's unmet needs (including those of their family/whānau if these impact on their wellbeing). It is co-ordinated by the child's dedicated Lead Professional and approved by the Children's Team Panel.

Children's Action Plan Directorate

The Children's Action Plan Directorate, led by the National Children's Director, oversees the governance arrangements, accountabilities and reporting mechanisms to support the development and implementation of the Children's Action Plan and the shared work programme. It leads and oversees the delivery of actions and activities for the whole programme of work, including linkages to the wider social sector programme of work.

The National Children's Director is accountable for the achievement of the Children's Action Plan work programme, including the establishment of Children's Teams.

Directorate Workstreams include: Children's Teams Operations, Workforce Programme, Vulnerable Kids Information System (ViKi), The Vulnerable Children's Hub, Information Sharing, Quality Assurance and Evaluation.

Children's Team

A Children's Team comprises the people and infrastructure required to coordinate and give effect to the trans-disciplinary approach to assessing and addressing the needs of a vulnerable child referred to the Team.

It includes all those directly participating in the operation of the Children's Team approach, including:

- Children's Team Director
 - Local Governance Group
 - Administrator and Coordinator
 - Children's Team Panel
 - Lead Professionals
 - Child's Action Networks
 - Service Broker
-

Children's Team
Director

The Children's Team Director is a local leader who is selected by their community and the CAP Directorate to lead the Children's Team.

Children's Team
Panel

The Children's Team Panel is the group of senior managers, professionals or practitioners convened by the Children's Team Director and Local Governance Group to oversee the progress with a referred child. They are drawn from across government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), iwi and community and are responsible for:

- determining whether to accept or decline a referral of a child to the Children's Team
 - identifying an appropriate Lead Professional for that child and their family/whānau
 - approving, monitoring and reviewing a child's Tuituia assessment and plan, including safety planning if appropriate, and exit
 - provide recommendations to Lead Professional regarding community resources
 - work to remove bureaucratic barriers both collectively and individually within their field of work.
-

Children's
workforce

Children's workers or the children's workforce are people working with and for children and young people (i.e. those who plan, manage, and deliver services) including volunteers. Collectively these people form the children's workforce. Only children's workers in the government-funded workforce are subject to the safety checking requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Children's workers

The total estimated number of paid children's workers in the government-funded workforce (who will need to be safety checked) is about 282,000. This includes

- 147,000 people in the education workforce (registered teachers, teacher aides, non-teaching school staff)
 - 86,000 people in the health workforce (doctors and nurses, non-regulated workers, allied and technical workers)
 - 27,000 people in the social development workforce (Child, Youth and Family staff, OSCAR providers, other MSD staff)
 - 22,000 people in the justice sector (Police officers, other justice sector staff and contractors).
-

Expert Advisory
Panel

This is an independent panel of experts appointed by the Minister for Social Development to lead the development and implementation of a new operating model to modernise CYF. The Expert Advisory Panel has published a high level business case in July and an interim report in September, with a detailed business case to follow in December 2015.

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/cyf-modernisation/>

Lead Professional

The Lead Professional is a professional or practitioner assigned to a vulnerable child when accepted by the Children's Team Panel. They are the advocate for that child and their family/whānau and are responsible for gathering of information that will enable completion of the whole of child assessment and developing the Child's Plan ensuring that all relevant parties including the child, their family/whānau, and professionals and practitioners contribute.

The Lead Professional is the main point of contact for the vulnerable child and their family/whānau, as well as for the professionals and practitioners addressing their unmet needs. The Lead Professional is responsible for ensuring access to the necessary services for the child and their family/whānau. They make sure that the Child's Plan stays on track, and monitor and review the Plan to ensure it is effective in getting better results for the child. The Lead Professional reports back to the Children's Team Panel on progress or to seek advice.

Local Governance
Group (LGG)

The Local Governance Group (LGG) comprises leading members of the local community who are involved with vulnerable children, such as the Director of Education, iwi representative, or chairperson of a local non-government organisation (NGO). The LGG ensures the Children's Team Director has the resources necessary to address the needs of the vulnerable children and their family/whānau in their communities.

Non-government
organisation (NGO)

A non-government organisation (NGO) is any organisation that is independent of government (either central or local) although it may receive financial and/or other support from government. It is also:

- self-governing – controls its own activities and is not under the effective control of any other body
- non-compulsory – although membership might be necessary to practise a profession (for example, the New Zealand Law Society)
- non-profit making – does not exist to produce profits for itself and is not chiefly guided by commercial goals and considerations.

<http://www.oag.govt.nz/2006/funding-ngos/part2.htm>

Service Broker

The Service Broker supports the contribution of their sector by working with Lead Professionals and gathering information to inform and build a Child's Plan. They also help secure services for a child and their family/whānau. This is achieved by having a full understanding of the service provision landscape and brokering the required services to support plans and ensure services are being delivered on time and to the required standard.

Social Sector Board Deputy Chief Executives (Operations) (SSB DCEs (Ops))

SSB DCEs (Operations) provides assurance to the Vulnerable Children's Board (VCB) and undertakes decision-making as delegated by VCB.

Chair: Social Sector DCE, Ministry of Social Development

Members: Deputy Chief Executives from the Ministries of Social Development, Health, Justice, Education and NZ Police, and the National Children's Director.

Superu

Superu or the Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (formerly the Families Commission) works across the social sector to:

- promote informed debate on key social issues for New Zealand, its families and whānau, and increase awareness about what works
- grow the quality, relevance and quantity of evidence in priority areas
- facilitate the use of evidence by sharing it and supporting its use in decision-making.

<http://www.superu.govt.nz/>

Trans-disciplinary approach

The trans-disciplinary philosophy is that complex needs cannot be understood or addressed from a singular perspective. Trans-disciplinary teams involve a team of practitioners who work collaboratively and share the responsibilities of evaluating, planning and implementing services to children and their families. One professional acts as the lead and ensures the child and their family receives co-ordinated care, involve the child and family in all decisions, and acts as the point of contact for the family, team and services. Children and their families/whānau are central members of a trans-disciplinary network.

Tuituia

Tuituia is the whole of child, common assessment framework used by Children's Teams and Child, Youth and Family (CYF).

CYF developed Tuituia as a whole of child assessment framework for vulnerable children based on international evidence and best practice, e.g. see the *White Paper for Vulnerable Children Volume II, Chapter 5 p.85*. Since the White Paper proposed having a consistent assessment framework across all children's services, it was agreed to use Tuituia as the whole of child assessment for the CAP.

Tuituia includes all aspects of a child's wellbeing (domains) and also parenting capability and environmental factors. The Tuituia assessment framework is used for assessing a child's unmet needs and strengths, and for measuring their progress at planned points in time as follows:

- At notification to the Vulnerable Children's Hub (basic information entered where possible)
- On acceptance by a Children's Team (comprehensive information gathered and assessed)
- Periodically to review every three months to track progress while with the Children's Team
- On exit.

The Lead Professional undertakes the Tuituia assessment by bringing together information from a wide range of sources, including from existing databases, the child, and members of their family/whānau, and professionals and practitioners currently working with the child. This information is summarised under the domains of the Tuituia assessment framework to enable the Lead Professional to draw conclusions about the degree to which the child's needs are met. This is used to track progress and identify results.

The child and their family/whānau also contribute to the Tuituia assessment through a self-assessment process.

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children are children who are at significant risk of harm to their wellbeing now and into the future as a consequence of the environment in which they are being raised and, in some cases, due to their own complex needs.

CYF is responsible for children who have or are suspected to have been physically or sexually abused or neglected and are at **immediate risk of harm**. Children's Teams are responsible for vulnerable children where there is a **significant, but not immediate**, risk of harm.

Vulnerable
Children's Board
(VCB)

The VCB oversees the implementation of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and the Children's Action Plan 2012. Under the Act they are required to work together to support vulnerable children and develop and give effect to the Vulnerable Children's Plan.

Chair: Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development

Members: Five jointly accountable Chief Executives (Ministries of Health, Education, Social Development and Justice, and the Police Commissioner).

Vulnerable
Children's Hub (The
Hub)

The Vulnerable Children's Hub (The Hub) has been implemented initially for Hamilton professionals and practitioners only, as a new contact and triage point for people to raise concerns about a child which they do not think are serious enough for CYF or the Police.

The Hub leverages CYF National Contact centre facilities and resources, including some of its staff who are specifically trained to work in The Hub. The Hub has its own brand identity and phone number (0800 FOR OURKIDS) so there is clear separation between The Hub and CYF.

The Hub social workers draw on a range of information, initially from the Ministry of Social Development systems, to assess the initial contact and decide whether to refer the case to a Children's Team, CYF, a non-government organisation (NGO) or a universal service. The Hub will use ViKI to manage this process. The AISA between partner agencies will support the necessary information sharing within The Hub.

Vulnerable Children's Plan

Since the development of the first Children's Action Plan, the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (the Act) was passed which specifies that a 'vulnerable children's plan' should be developed.

The responsible Minister first sets Government priorities for improving the wellbeing of vulnerable children, after consulting with the other children's Ministers. Then the Chief Executives of the children's agencies (VCB) work together to develop the draft vulnerable children's plan.

The Vulnerable Children's Plan must contribute to:

- promoting the best interests of vulnerable children (having regard to the whole of their lives), including (without limitation) taking measures aimed at:
 - protecting them from abuse and neglect;
 - improving their physical and mental health and their cultural and emotional wellbeing;
 - improving their education and training and their participation in recreation and cultural activities;
 - strengthening their connection to their families, whānau, hapū, and iwi, or other culturally recognised family group;
 - increasing their participation in decision making about them, and their contribution to society; and
 - improving their social and economic wellbeing.

A Vulnerable Children's Plan will be developed in 2016 following the release of the final report from the Expert Advisory Panel on modernising CYF.

Vulnerable Kids Information System (ViKI)

ViKI is an information management system for use in The Hub and by Children's Teams. It enables professionals and practitioners to record, access and manage information about vulnerable children. It securely stores that information, supports case management and enables reporting on results.

Whole of child assessment

A whole of child assessment assesses a child's needs across all aspects of their wellbeing and the degree to which they are met, as well as those of their parents/caregivers and family/whānau as far as they influence the wellbeing of the child. The first whole of child assessment used by Children's Teams was the *Whole of Child Kete*. In 2014, Tuituia was adopted by the Children's Teams as it was strongly evidence-based, consistent with the *Whole of Child Kete*, and provided for a common assessment framework with CYF.

