

child, youth and family



# child, youth and family

For most children, New Zealand is a great place to grow up. Most but not all. Some families struggle and some children suffer. Some break the law.

Child, Youth and Family provides high quality social work services to children, young people, and their families, who are referred to us either because they have or are likely to have experienced harm or neglect, or because of youth offending.

This section explains what we do and the way we mean to go about it over the next three years. It explains how we, with the support of the Ministry of Social Development, will build on our strengths to improve the quality of our service delivery, and improve the outcomes of our most vulnerable young New Zealanders.

# our vision

**Child, Youth and Family** has a vision of “safe children and young people in strong families and responsive communities – free from abuse, free from neglect and free from offending”.

**We are** child-centred and family-focused. We are guided by the objectives and principles of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989, and the Care of Children Act 2004, which emphasise the need to strengthen the connections between children, young people and their families, whānau, hapū, iwi and other family groups. We are also guided by adoption legislation.

**We value** the role that our government and community partners play in meeting the needs of children, young people and their families. We are committed to developing and maintaining strong working relationships with these partners so we can work together to help achieve positive outcomes for all children and young people in New Zealand.

# executive summary

Few of us will do anything greater than help raise a child. That is why, at Child, Youth and Family, we are so proud of what we do.

We help those children and young people of New Zealand who are abused or neglected, or who commit offences. We work with their families – young and old, to help make them safe or to keep them from re-offending. We also help new families form, through adoption, and enable adult adopted people to access information about their birth histories.

Our work is very demanding. Solutions do not come easily when families break down. Our staff must be committed, resilient and multi-skilled. They must work effectively with our partners. They must also be backed by a strong organisation.

The merger of Child, Youth and Family and the Ministry of Social Development on 1 July 2006 will strengthen both agencies. We will work closely together to build our relationships with our partners; improve our services to vulnerable children, young people and their families; and intensify our whole-of-government approach to helping children and young people in need.

Internationally and in New Zealand, demand is growing for services that can respond to child abuse and neglect. One possible reason is higher awareness of and reduced tolerance for child abuse and neglect. Another is the increased pressures many families face.

A priority for Child, Youth and Family is to ensure we effectively respond to this increasing demand for our services. Our merger with the Ministry of Social Development on 1 July 2006 will provide strong organisational support for this work.

We will continue to develop our understanding of why demand is increasing in New Zealand, as it is overseas. We will continue to improve our capability, and the capability of our external partners, to provide the high-quality services that children, young people, and their families need.

As part of a co-ordinated response, the second priority is to reduce the time in care for children and young people who have suffered abuse or neglect or who have offended. We will do this by supporting early intervention and prevention, and supporting families to look after their own children and young people where possible. When a child or a young person does go into care, we will provide integrated services that work towards stability and permanency in their lives.

Our third priority for the next two to three years is to enhance our capability to administer Youth Justice services. We'll focus on delivering quality Family Group Conferences, and on developing the capability of Youth Justice providers.

Each of these priorities supports the others. A successful Family Group Conference may result in the young person staying in the family home, rather than needing to enter care. Our collaborative work on prevention and early intervention can lead to reduced demand for our services, reduced risk of child abuse and neglect, and reduced risk of youth offending.

Achieving these priorities requires our commitment to continuous learning and improvement. We need to continue exploring ways of collaborating with others, at strategic and service delivery levels; to build our knowledge; to build good relationships with hapū, iwi and community service providers; and to recruit and retain our skilled and experienced staff.

The next two to three years will be a time of change and growth for Child, Youth and Family. We look forward to the many benefits from our merger with the Ministry of Social Development, and to continuous improvement of the quality and availability of services to children, young people, and their families.

# our environment

## INTRODUCTION

A number of factors contribute to New Zealanders being able to meet their potential and contribute positively to society. These include positive outcomes in a range of areas: Social, Health, Economic, Family and Whānau, Education, Cultural and Justice. Strong families, whānau and their members create their own opportunities and take advantage of opportunities presented to them. When they are achieving their potential and making positive contributions to society, supported by government, business, and the community where needed, then the work of Child, Youth and Family is eased.

This environmental scan looks at several influences that contribute to positive family or individual wellbeing. We have acknowledged key trends in areas such as Economic, Health, Education and Justice, detailed in the environmental scan for the Ministry of Social Development. Our interest in these trends tell us that the absence of positive economic and health outcomes in particular, present key risks to the wellbeing of young New Zealanders, and can in turn lead to their abuse, neglect, or to their offending. The focus of this environmental scan is on areas having the most impact on our work. These include:

- Social and demographic in relation to children, young people and families
- Care and Protection
- Youth Justice.

## SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Child, Youth and Family faces a growing need for staff with the knowledge, skills and training necessary to work effectively with people from non-European backgrounds. Recognition of our diverse client needs is reflected in our Differential Response Model, p 135, and our *Te Pounamu* strategy and Pacific Peoples' Responsiveness plan.

The actual numbers of children and young people will not necessarily drive the demand for Child, Youth and Family's services, the quality of young New Zealanders' lives will.

That said, we know:

- the number of children under 18 years (Child, Youth and Family's client base) is projected to decline by 2011. From 1991 to 2001, New Zealand has experienced growth in the numbers of 10 – 14 year olds. Numbers are projected to continue to increase and peak in 2006.
- children and young people are becoming **more ethnically diverse**, with a growing proportion identifying as non-European. For instance, projections indicate that by 2021, 28% will identify as Māori, 17% as Pacific, and 15% as Asian. Fewer will identify as European (63% in 2021, down from 74% in 2001).
- there will be an increase of Māori (younger and older) who will have enhanced Māori cultural and language proficiency, as a result of Māori education at all levels of schooling, and the recent significant increase in Māori participation at tertiary wānanga.

#### CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURES

Child, Youth and Family will increasingly need to find ways to help children, young people and their families achieve stability while family structures are changing, and as families respond to this change.

Child, Youth and Family is implementing the Permanency policy, to help achieve more permanent and stable situations for children and young people in care, see p 136.

In New Zealand, we know:

- an increasing number of families will be extended by the general aging of the population and the accumulation of life-long members, including in-laws from first marriages and new "half-kin" from later marriages and partnerships.
- children's experiences of blended families is generally short. For nearly half, the spell ends in five years. Children in blended families, especially girls aged 10 – 16 and in families with step-fathers, tend to leave home at an earlier age than children in other family circumstances.

Many families adapt successfully to change, but there can also be levels of poverty, tension, **instability and insecurity** that put children and young people at risk.

## TRENDS FOR KEY OUTCOMES AREAS

Overall, the economic situation for most individuals and families in New Zealand has improved. Some individuals and families still struggle with low living standards, particularly Māori and Pacific people. Child, Youth and Family services are likely to be most needed by families under such pressures.

We know that economic security and educational attainment in particular, are protective factors against risk of poor health and justice outcomes. For instance:

- socio-economic circumstances and characteristics of where people live are the key determinants for health outcomes
- job loss and the experience of unemployment can contribute to poor mental health and substance abuse; or conversely, have a positive effect if employment is found after a period of unemployment
- low family income over a long period of time, not only contributes to poor health outcomes, but lower educational attainment also
- low living standards have been identified as factors contributing to abuse and neglect, which means there is a risk that children in these families may experience abuse and neglect.

Child, Youth and Family's work does not directly contribute to positive economic outcomes, or eliminate or ease low living standards. Instead, we rely on the work of other government agencies, business, communities, family and whānau, and individuals to improve social, health and economic outcomes for all New Zealanders. We work towards, improving the wellbeing of children and young people who receive our services, and easing further stress and tension that affect our client families.

## TRENDS WITHIN THE CARE AND PROTECTION AND YOUTH JUSTICE AREAS

Trends within these areas inform or guide both the strategic and operational work of Child, Youth and Family.

### INCREASING REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

New Zealand trends are consistent with trends in some OECD countries, in so far as child welfare agencies experiencing sizable increases in reported child abuse and neglect. Reports of abuse or neglect to Child, Youth and Family have risen, and the number of children and young people in care has increased.

- In 2004/2005 we received 53,097 notifications, a further 23% increase from 2003/2004.

- Some children and young people are more at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect than others. Māori children are more likely to be assessed as abused or neglected than non-Māori, although rates of substantiated abuse or neglect for Māori have been reducing. For instance, they dropped from 13 per 1,000 in 1998 to 11.9 per 1,000 in 2003, while rates for non-Māori increased over the same period, from 5.1 to 5.9 per 1,000. Pacific children are not over-represented.
- It is not certain that these trends reflect higher actual levels of child abuse and neglect. They have been attributed, at least in part, to increased awareness of – and lower tolerance for – the mistreatment of children and young people.

In New Zealand, the increase in police numbers by 1,000 over the next three years, and police focus on prevention of family violence is likely to increase the demand for Child, Youth and Family's services. To help determine and manage possible impacts, we will work closely with Police at a strategic level. See *Managing Our Risks*, p 141.

#### CHILDREN IN STATE CARE AND KINSHIP CARE

Improving permanency and stability for children and young people in care, is an outcome for Child, Youth and Family. Work in this area is not only guided by our Permanency policy, but our Care and Protection practice framework, p 136. We also rely on the practice of our social workers.

In New Zealand:

- there has been a relatively steady increase in the number of children and young people in care. The annual rate of growth has been at about 3 – 5% for the last two – three years.
- there is an increasing proportion of care placements with family or whānau (kinship care), rather than unrelated foster families, as this generally enhances permanency and stability for the young person; a trend consistent with some OECD countries.  
For example:
  - increasing reliance on kinship carers has resulted in the call for greater government assisted support for them.
  - in Northern and Western Europe, numbers of children in state care have been decreasing, largely as a result of a drop in welfare spending and poor standards of institutional care. At the same time, foster care has been increasing.

## YOUTH JUSTICE

Child, Youth and Family is committed to a family and whānau, community and whole of government approach in our Youth Justice work. This involves, for example, Family Group Conferences and Whānau Agreements, p 136.

Within the OECD:

- More recently, there appears to be renewed attention to welfare measures that have the potential to reduce offending and re-offending. Some countries have recognised that focusing more intensely on investigation and legal sanctions has produced reactive Youth Justice systems that have not taken opportunities to address the causes of offending.
- A focus on welfare measures in Youth Justice includes an increased focus on early intervention, more use of diversion and community-based sanctions, use of custodial sentences only as a last resort, a focus on proven rehabilitation programmes, and an emphasis on a “whole of government” approach to youth crime prevention.

### NEW ZEALAND FOCUS

- Referrals to Child, Youth and Family for Youth Justice Family Group Conferences have begun to rise again after falling for a short time. After rising for several years, referrals fell by about 5% between 2004 and the first half of 2005, and began to rise again from July 2005.
- The focus of Youth Justice intervention is on increasing the options available for addressing youth offending and re-offending.
- The Family Group Conference (FGC) is the key mechanism for addressing offending. While a study of Family Group Conferences in Sweden found FGCs had very little effect on re-offending, a longitudinal study of Family Group Conferences in New Zealand suggests they can contribute to lessening the chance of re-offending, even when other important factors (such as adverse events in early life) are taken into account.
- Demand for Child, Youth and Family’s Family Group Conferences are increasing.
- Alternatives to custodial sentences are recognised as an important way of reducing the reliance on high cost residential services for young people who require intensive assistance, but do not necessarily require a custodial replacement.
- There is an emphasis on the therapeutic process to help modify behaviours that can contribute to reducing re-offending.

For more details on Child, Youth and Family’s key Youth Justice initiatives, see p 136 and p 137.

**CONCLUSION**

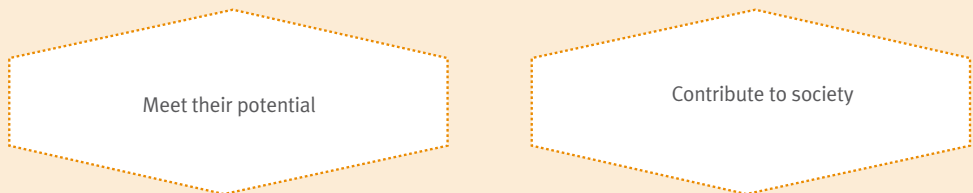
Overall, the demand for Child, Youth and Family's services is increasing. While all drivers for service demand are not fully understood, we can say the increase is due in part to the heightened public awareness and intolerance of the maltreatment of children and young people, and the impact of policies in other agencies. In a fiscally tight environment, we are responding to the challenge of better understanding the demand drivers, and finding ways to effectively manage and respond to that demand.

### CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY OUTCOMES HIERARCHY

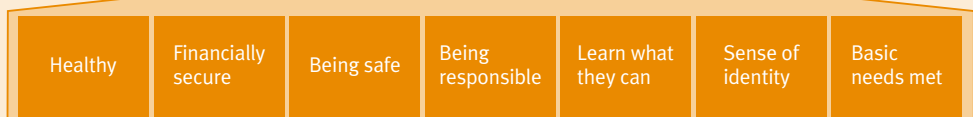
GOVERNMENT OUTCOMES



ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEW ZEALAND



WELLBEING OUTCOMES



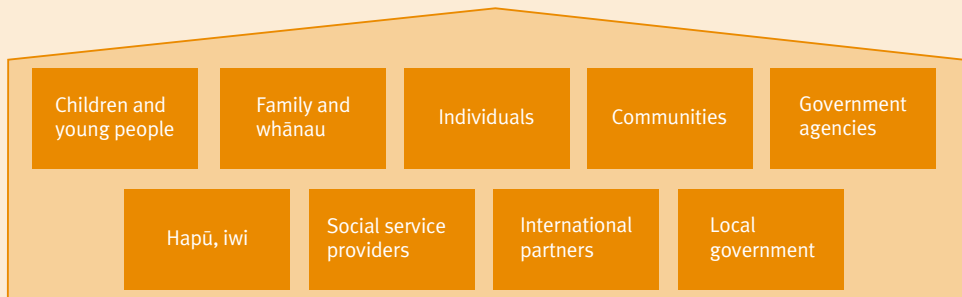
CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY OUTCOMES



PRIORITIES 2006/2007



STAKEHOLDERS



# managing for outcomes

This section introduces Child, Youth and Family's outcomes in the context of Government's priorities, and Social and Justice sector outcomes, and more broadly, in the context of outcomes which the whole of society contributes to.

## GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

The Government's priorities for the next decade are focused on three themes. Child, Youth and Family supports the theme of families – young and old, and the sub-themes of:

- Strong families
- Healthy confident kids
- Safe communities.

## STATE SERVICES DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Child, Youth and Family supports each development goal (listed below) through working closely and collaboratively with all our stakeholders, our focus on continuous learning and improvement, particularly building our people capability, and our commitment to a "whole of government" approach to service provision, particularly through strengthening our strategic partnerships.

- Employer of choice – ensure the State Services is an employer of choice attractive to high achievers with a commitment
- Excellent state servants – develop a strong culture of constant learning in the pursuit of excellence
- Networked state agencies – use technology to transform the provision of services for New Zealanders
- Co-ordinated state agencies – ensure the total contribution of government agencies is greater than the sum of its parts
- Accessible state services "no wrong door" – enhance access, responsiveness and effectiveness, and improve New Zealanders' experience of State Services.
- Trusted state services – strengthen trust in the State Services, and reinforce the spirit of service.

## POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

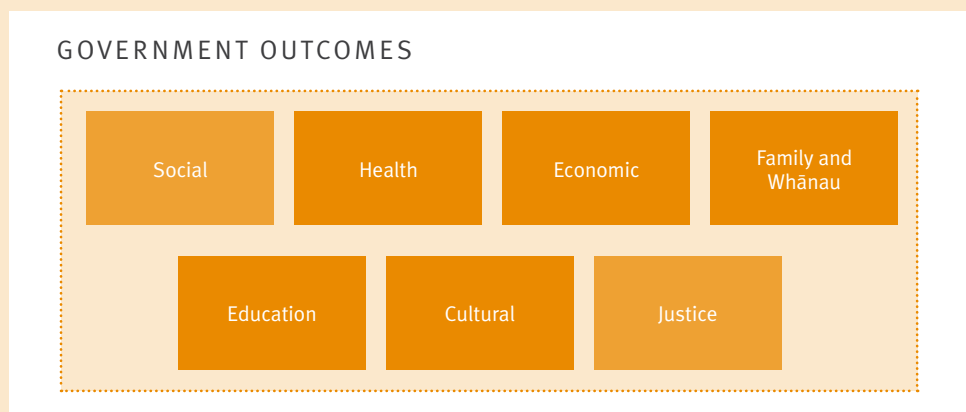
New Zealand's future depends on our children and young people. Their wellbeing matters to all of us. How well they do affects how well New Zealand does as a society.

Children and young people who are well supported throughout their young lives are more likely to reach their full potential at school, in higher education, in work, and in artistic or sports activities. They are more likely to enjoy healthy and productive lives, become good parents, responsible members of their communities and be positive contributors to New Zealand's future.

To enhance the wellbeing of children and young people, to enable them to reach their potential and contribute positively to society, Child, Youth and Family believes young New Zealanders need to be healthy, financially secure, safe, responsible, learn what they can; have a sense of identity and their basic needs met.

The range of factors contributing to child wellbeing is wide. No single organisation or social structure can fully deliver in all areas. The combined efforts of government, the community, iwi, hapū, family and whānau are critical to improving child wellbeing. Child, Youth and Family recognise that to achieve our outcomes, we are also dependent upon the work of others. This is why Child, Youth and Family is committed to working closely and collaboratively with our stakeholders, and supporting a whole of government approach to achieving its outcomes.

# our outcomes in context



## CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL AND JUSTICE OUTCOMES

Child, Youth and Family contribute to government's broad outcomes in two sectors: the Social development sector and the Justice sector.

- the outcome of "families and whānau living free from violence" through our participation in the *Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy*
- social development outcomes for children and young people, and families – young and old, through our core work of protecting children and young people from abuse, neglect and insecurity of care
- improved outcomes for Māori and Pacific peoples, through our commitment to operationalising our *Te Pounamu* strategy (to guide our work with Māori stakeholders) and our Pacific peoples' responsiveness plan
- the Justice sector outcome of "safer communities" through our commitment to the Youth offending strategy and implementation of the Youth Justice plan.

# our outcomes focus

## ABUSE, NEGLECT AND OFFENDING

Child, Youth and Family's legislative mandate means our contribution to these outcomes is mainly focused on children and young people who suffer abuse or neglect, and on those who offend.

### CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY OUTCOMES



### KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FREE FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Most of our work involves preventing the recurrence of child abuse, of neglect, and of insecurity of care – that is, keeping safe children who have already been harmed. For these children and young people who become Child, Youth and Family clients, our work also involves addressing and restoring or improving wellbeing.

We also have a secondary role in working towards preventing the first occurrence of abuse, neglect or insecurity of care.

Our merger with the Ministry of Social Development on 1 July 2006 will strengthen our work to support, protect and care for children and young people.

### KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FREE FROM OFFENDING

For children and young people to make a positive contribution to society, they need to be free from offending. All of society has a role in steering young people away from offending. Child, Youth and Family works with children and young people who have committed offences.

In contributing towards this outcome, we aim to reduce the rate and severity of child and youth re-offending, and hold young people to account for offending. While working closely with others, we also aim to restore the wellbeing of young offenders.

In working towards both of these outcomes, Child, Youth and Family also aims to achieve secondary outcomes:

- **permanency and stability** for children and young people who receive our Care and Protection services
- **strengthening the resilience** of children, young people and their families as a protective measure against the risk of abuse, neglect and offending
- **restoration** of wellbeing for children and young people who have been abused, and for young offenders.

#### PRIORITIES 2006/2007

Reducing time in care for children and young people

Administering Youth Justice services

Responding to demand

## OUR PRIORITIES

Child, Youth and Family has chosen the following **priorities** for 2006/2007:

### REDUCING TIME IN CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

There has been a steady increase in the number of children and young people in care in New Zealand. Improving permanency and stability for children and young people in care is an outcome of Child, Youth and Family. We will:

- support our family and whānau clients to look after their own children and young people
- work towards achieving more stability and permanency in children and young peoples' lives
- support early intervention and prevention
- continue to develop a more integrated approach to children and young people who receive our services.

### ADMINISTERING YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES

Focusing on improving Youth Justice services and on increasing the options available for addressing youth offending and re-offending is an outcome for Child, Youth and Family. We will:

- enhance our capacity and capability - for example, in delivering quality Family Group Conferences and better implementation of plans and orders
- develop the capacity and capability of Youth Justice providers - for example, in managing placements
- complete and implement the Youth Justice Capability Review.

### RESPONDING TO DEMAND

Reports of child abuse and neglect have risen significantly over the last two years. However, it is not certain that these trends reflect higher actual levels of child abuse and neglect. To help determine and manage demand, we will:

- continue to develop effective ways of responding to the demand for our services, for example, by establishing ways of tailoring our services to meet the needs of children, young people and their families
- improve our understanding of the drivers of demand
- continually develop and improve our ability to deliver high quality services
- complete a Responses to Demand External Review (to follow)
- develop our core capabilities to underpin the sustainable delivery of high quality services to children, young people and their families
- develop the capability and capacity of external providers to deliver high quality services

- contribute to the social service sector through our leadership, in ensuring vulnerable children, young people and their families have access to the “right door” at the right time
- consolidate gains in our economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

### RESPONSES TO DEMAND EXTERNAL REVIEW

This review was directed by the Cabinet Committee on Government Expenditure. Its primary objective is to improve the performance of the Care and Protection system (and its value for money) in managing demand for services within the resources available. The fundamental goal is to address sustainability of the Care and Protection system by stabilising and then reducing the notifications of abuse and neglect.

The review will be undertaken between March and September 2006 and will focus specifically on two parts of the Care and Protection system:

- the entry point, or “front-end”, of the statutory (Child, Youth and Family) part of the system
- the early intervention contribution that community service providers and other government agencies (particularly Police, Health and Education) can make to ensuring the right service responses are directed to the right children and families, and also reduce the pressure on the statutory system.

The review will be undertaken in two phases:

Phase one will deliver a synopsis of what is currently known about the factors underpinning the growth in notifications to Child, Youth and Family, the interface between Child, Youth and Family’s clients and other government sectors, and the current responses in New Zealand and in comparable jurisdictions.

Phase two will develop the “whole of government” and specific organisational responses to those factors including information sharing, improved management systems or cross-cutting responses. Phase two will focus on quick wins and action learning, and will have three work streams:

- Early Intervention – building a continuum of preventative services so the potential clients of Child, Youth and Family have their needs met before they become notifications
- Managing Demand – this will include:
  - an examination of the impact of re-notifications on service demand and recommendations for addressing this
  - improving the consistency of how the Child, Youth and Family threshold is defined
  - influencing notifier behaviour to improve the quality of notifications focused on children and young people seriously at risk
- Smart Screening – reviewing whether there are more effective tools to distinguish genuine Care and Protection concerns from those cases not requiring a statutory intervention, and identifying a multi-service approach to those families most likely to have on-going issues that would increase the likelihood of re-notifications.

## WHAT WE AIM TO ACHIEVE

In working towards achieving our outcomes, we will continue to progress several strategic initiatives aimed at improving our ability to respond to demand, reduce the number of children and young people in care, and build our capability.

# our core business – dealing with abuse, neglect and offending

This section includes descriptions of our work in key areas. It also includes a brief description of our Adoption services, a minor but important role for Child, Youth and Family.

## DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

When abuse, neglect or insecurity of care is reported to us, we assess and when necessary investigate the situation. If there is an urgent need to ensure the child is safe, we arrange care. We involve Police, Health and Education agencies in investigations if necessary. If the need for action is less urgent we can arrange short term help through a Family/ Whānau Agreement.

Where Care and Protection plans are needed we develop these through Family Group Conferences. These include the child or young person and others such as family members, and people from government, including Police, and community groups. We work with all participants to implement plans for the long-term wellbeing of children and young people at risk.

We provide or fund services in collaboration with the wider social services sector, to help children, young people and their families address common issues, improve family functioning and promote wellbeing. We also provide the government and others with research, evaluation and advice on policies relating to services for children, young people, families and communities.

Notifications of suspected child abuse or neglect are continuing to increase. The numbers of substantiated cases has also risen over the last four years.

## OUR CORE BUSINESS

In 2004/2005 we received	53,097	notices of suspected child abuse or neglect
In 2006/2007 we expect	73,437	notifications
We expect	73%	of these will require further action
Approximately	7,612	Family Group Conferences will be held
Approximately	3,697	children and young people will be newly placed in care
There will be about	5,148	children and young people in care
About	17,972	children and young people will need our services
About	13,000	children and young people will have abuse or neglect substantiated

### PATRICIA'S STORY

Now sitting in a new office, not far from Child, Youth and Family's office where she is on secondment from her supervisor post, Patricia is bursting with plans and ideas about how to change the family violence landscape in her region that has seen some of the country's worst cases of child abuse and child deaths in recent years.

Family Safety Teams are a new concept and one that is putting all her qualifications – a Bachelor of Social Work from Massey – and her skills and experience to their fullest use.

The Family Safety Teams is a pilot initiative launched in July 2005 with two teams already operational in other regions. Two more teams will be operating in other parts of the country within the next nine months.

Each team has 10 members led by a team leader. Patricia is one of two Child, Youth and Family child victim advocates. Other members are drawn from the police and the community sector.

The team's role is to share information on family violence, develop best practice and ensure access to services. They work closely with community service providers, which are also represented on the team.

About 10 children are killed every year in family violence situations and the team's work will be crucial in providing a more integrated approach to family violence, thereby addressing poorer coordination of responses by different agencies.

Patricia has been kept very busy in the past couple of months, since the formation of the team. They've found new premises, set up new systems and policies, designed a new referral form, met with many community service providers and prepared a presentation to the community.

At the moment, Patricia is involved in designing the equivalent of the Risk Evaluation System for family violence victims. Once the police member comes on board then the team will be doing more outreach work with the community. Patricia is grateful for the support she has had from the local office to release her for this secondment, despite existing pressures of work on the team. Patricia says she opted for the secondment because she saw family violence as one of the big issues in her region, and thinks 'not necessarily the numbers but the extent of family violence in the area is unique'.

(Patricia is not our social worker's real name. The community and region have also not been named).

## DEALING WITH YOUTH OFFENDING

Our Youth Justice work concerns those children and young people who are referred to us by the Police. Depending on the nature of their offending, some of these children and young people will also be facing Court proceedings. The Family Group Conference is the main process we use to find solutions. A conference will involve the victim should they choose to attend, the offender, the Police, Child, Youth and Family, and often members of the offender's family.

We work with everyone involved in a Family Group Conference to hold the young person accountable and develop plans to prevent re-offending. When we have agreement on a plan, we work with families to carry it out, including compliance with any Court orders. If a child or young person is placed in the custody or guardianship of Child, Youth and Family, we arrange the necessary care, including residential services when required.

Children and young people referred to us by the Police, currently number about 8,500-9,500 a year. Depending on the nature of their offending, some will also be facing Court proceedings.

### OUR CORE BUSINESS

In 2004/2005	8,153	young people were referred to Child, Youth and Family by Police
In 2006/2007 we expect about	10,486	referrals
We expect to convene about	7,654	Youth Justice Family Group Conferences
We expect to have about	150	young people in placement or detention

### SARAH'S STORY

"The Family Group Conference [FGC] was really hard. It was the first time I'd been through something like that. Before going to the conference I felt stuck, like I couldn't see the way forward. One of my victims came to the conference. Seeing her was heart-pounding, I was really tense.

"I gave written apologies to my victims and a verbal apology to the one who attended the conference. For me, the verbal apology was the hardest thing ever. I didn't want to do it but I knew I needed to, that it was the right thing to do. After the FGC we shook hands. That was pretty great.

"The recommendations [from the FGC] were there for me to show I was remorseful, to be accountable for what I'd done. They were really hard. I had to follow my bail conditions and go to counselling. I had to go live in another place and I had to pay reparation for the damage I'd done."

Sarah, 16, was charged with aggravated robbery, an offence that can lead to jail and a lifetime criminal record. The Youth Court ordered a Family Group Conference for Sarah, her family, her victim and the social agencies involved. The Child, Youth and Family Youth Justice co-ordinator organised the FGC.

"Sarah's family was prepared to hold her accountable for her offending and to support her to not re-offend, the co-ordinator says. "Her family's commitment made all the difference to the outcomes for Sarah."

After successfully meeting the demands of the court, Sarah was given a discharge by Police, which means she will not have a criminal record. She has since been living offence-free in the community.

(Sarah is not our client's real name).

## ADOPTION SERVICES

Our Adoption service assesses people who wish to adopt children and reports to the Family Court on adoption applications. We also help adopted people and birth parents involved in past “closed” adoptions to exchange identifying information, if they wish to do so. We maintain records, act as intermediaries if required, and provide advice and information.

(The information provided above is an indication only. For more information go to [www.cyf.govt.nz](http://www.cyf.govt.nz))

### OUR CORE BUSINESS

In 2005/2006 we will assess	418	applications to adopt a child
In 2006/2007 we expect about	450	applications to adopt
We expect about	1,100	requests for adoption information

### MATTHEW’S STORY

“I received a letter one day, out of the blue, from a Child, Youth and Family social worker, saying she had some personal information for me. She was from Adoption services, so I thought I knew what it would be about. I figured it might be something about my birth mother, who I had traced but not contacted.

“I phoned the social worker [Sally], who explained that she had a letter for me. It was from my birth father. It was up to me whether I wanted it or not, and whether I wanted him to know my contact details. I did want the letter and I didn’t mind him knowing about me. I had always thought I might never find out who he was.

“Sally came to my house with the letter. She told me what Child, Youth and Family knew about my birth father and explained that he had sent the letter to them, asking them to pass it on. It was a closed adoption, in the sixties, so of course he never knew what had happened to me. She said Child, Youth and Family very

rarely heard from birth fathers like that.

“Sally left me to read the letter by myself, which was just as well, because I howled. What really got me was that my birth father and his wife had celebrated my birthday every year. Not many things in life are so sweet and so sad at the same time.

“My birth father and I are in contact now and we will meet sometime. Child, Youth and Family also helped me relocate my birth mother again – I had traced her, but then lost her again. I hadn’t realised they could help search, but they found her in a few days. Now it’s up to me to get in touch.

“I got a lot of information from Sally about reunions, different ways to make contact and so on. It’s still a mind-bender. But I’ll do it.”

(Matthew is not our client’s real name; the social worker’s name has also been changed).

# dealing with abuse, neglect and offending – our work

## OUTPUTS

Child, Youth and Family produces the following outputs that correspond to output expense classes in the Forecast output performance statements.

### REDUCING TIME IN CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

<p><b>Intake, investigation and assessment</b></p>	<p>This involves receiving notifications of abuse, neglect and insecurity of care at the call centre and seeking to establish the risk of harm to the child or young person concerned. It also involves undertaking assessments and investigations to establish what the appropriate next steps are to keep the child safe and support the family as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Care services</b></p>	<p>This involves making case plans that identify issues to be resolved and which highlight opportunities for achieving permanency for the child or young person concerned. It also involves identifying needs to be addressed and services that should be provided, to support the resolution of ongoing issues. Undertaking emergency action to ensure the safety of children and young people is also included within this output. Our Permanency policy, p 136 influences work in this area.</p>
<p><b>Resolution services</b></p>	<p>This involves the provision or purchase of services to implement Family Group Conference plans and Court Orders. This also involves establishing effective relationships with children, young people and their families to identify their needs and possible support services to meet those needs, and help resolve ongoing issues.</p>

Case management	This involves convening and holding Family Group Conferences or making Family/Whānau agreements to maximise options for appropriate decision-making once the need for care and/or protection has been established. It involves bringing together family members as well as a range of appropriate agencies to help identify needs and explore ways to meet those needs. Case management also involves undertaking a comprehensive needs assessment, and assessment to identify possible risks to other family members.
Prevention services	This involves providing information to promote public awareness and preventing child abuse and neglect.

## ADMINISTERING YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES

Case management	This includes convening and holding Family Group Conferences involving the young person, their family, victims and all appropriate agencies. It also involves monitoring Family Group Conference plans and orders to ensure agreed tasks are completed.
Placement and detention	This involves providing residential services, organising community placements and promoting access to programmes that will assist the young person's re-integration into the community.
Restorative services	This involves providing or purchasing services to implement plans and orders following a Family Group Conference. It also involves social workers seeking to establish effective relationships with young people and their families, and with service providers, to ensure required services are delivered.

### ADOPTION SERVICES

Child, Youth and Family also provides Adoption services, including managing the adoption process for the placement of children in New Zealand. This involves fulfilling statutory requirements under the Adoption Act 1955, Adoption (Inter-country) Act 1997, Adult Adoption Information Act 1985, Adoption Amendment Act 1995, and Adoption Amendment Act 2000.

# our focus on continuous learning and improvement

## CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

For Child, Youth and Family to deliver quality services in the areas of Care and Protection, Youth Justice and Adoption, we also ensure we continue to develop a culture that promotes and supports continuous learning and improvement. This requires a focus on quality, from our systems and processes through to our front line social workers.

This means we are committed to:

- developing new ways of delivering high quality services that meet the needs of children, young people and their families, and our outcomes
- continually adapting and improving current services to ensure they meet the needs of our clients both now and in the future
- working closely and collaboratively with others to support an integrated approach to the wellbeing of children and young people
- building our knowledge about children, young people and their families, and the skills to analyse and act on it
- building our people capability to ensure our staff can play a full role in developing and delivering our services to achieve our outcomes
- building our social work practice to support vulnerable children, young people and their families
- creating a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

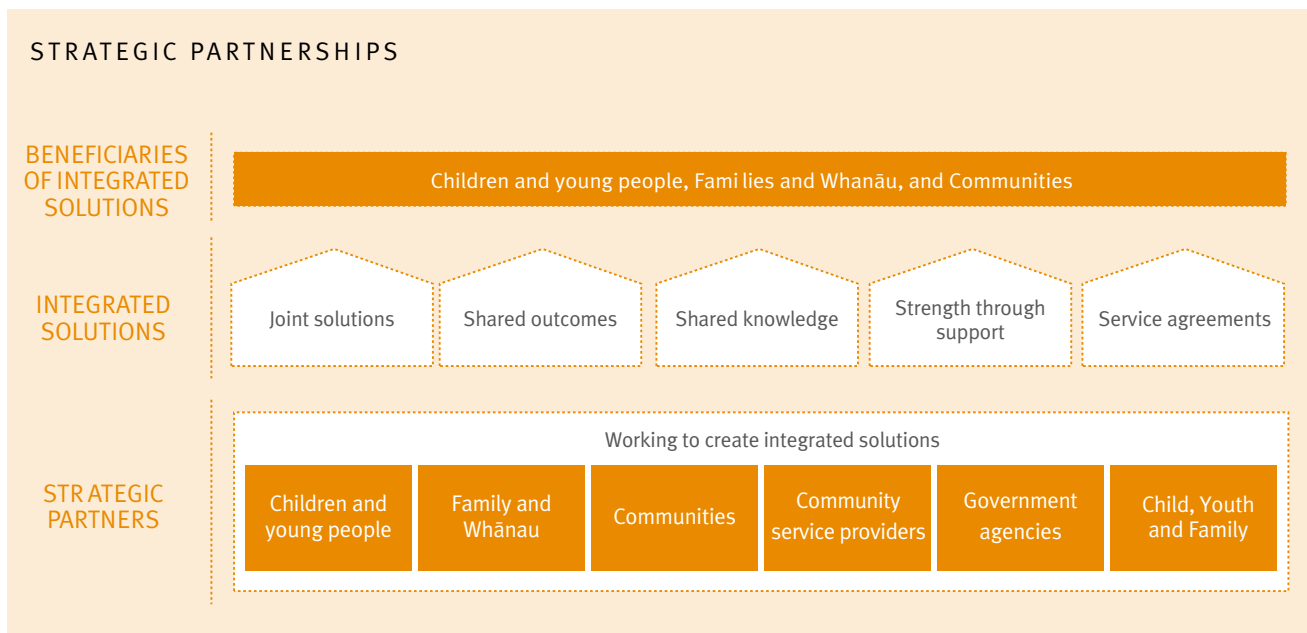
## WORKING CLOSELY AND COLLABORATIVELY WITH OTHERS

Child, Youth and Family recognises that we operate one service in a continuum of services, all of which contribute to our outcomes, as well as the wider outcomes of wellbeing for children, young people and their families. Achievement of outcomes is most effective when government and the community work closely and collaboratively.

### WORKING WITH OTHERS AT A STRATEGIC LEVEL

Child, Youth and Family works closely with a number of government agencies, iwi, hapū, community service providers and other groups including, schools, nurses, doctors, families and whānau. The diagram below shows the inter-relationship and inter-dependencies between our key stakeholders.

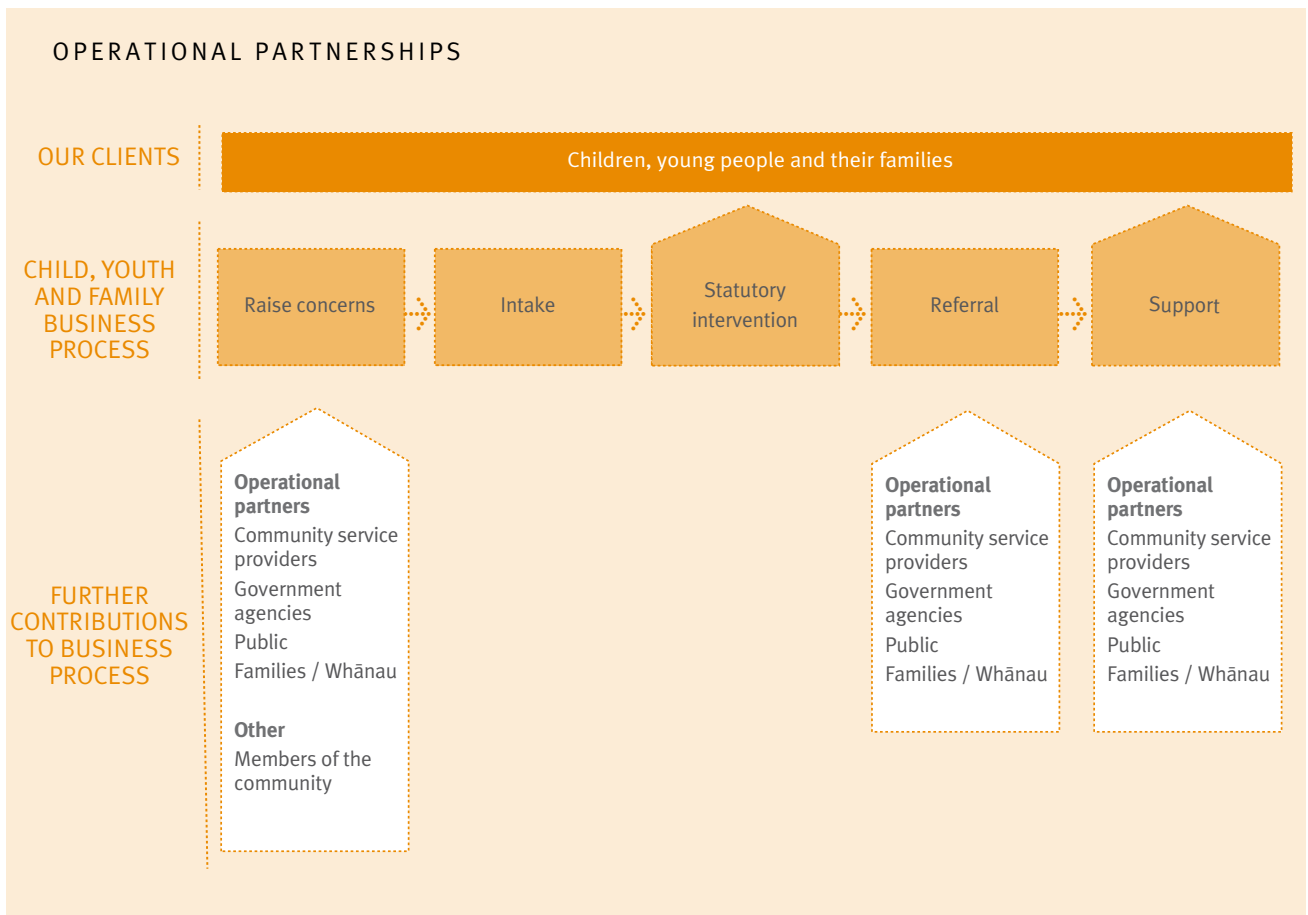
We are committed to strengthening collaborative relationships with others at the strategic level, to work more effectively to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people. Our recognition of the Treaty relationship between Māori and the Crown, and recognition of the needs of Māori and Pacific clients in particular, is reflected in our *Te Pounamu* strategy (focused on enhancing our services for Māori clients) and the Pacific Responsiveness plan. At a strategic level, these initiatives focus on building Māori and Pacific provider capability.



**WORKING WITH OTHERS ON OUR CORE BUSINESS**

In dealing with abuse, neglect and young offenders, we work closely with community service providers. This involves, for example, carrying out plans and orders put in place to keep children and young people safe. This also involves providing and purchasing the services necessary to prevent future harm and neglect, and to improve and restore wellbeing.

The diagram below indicates the contributions at a business level that government agencies, community service providers, hapū, families, carers and other stakeholders play in assisting to improve and restore the wellbeing of children and young people who receive our services.



Recognising that positive outcomes for children and young people who receive our services cannot be achieved without the support of others, our commitment to working closely and collaboratively with them is reflected in the following initiatives:

- building an understanding of the outcomes that Child, Youth and Family works towards, and the complementary roles of government and non-government organisations (NGOs) in achieving these outcomes
- building effective relationships with community providers of family services at local and national levels, including with Māori and Pacifica providers
- developing a strategy for the purchase of services from community providers that support the achievement of Child, Youth and Family priority outcomes
- working closely with other parts of the Ministry of Social Development, as the Family Support services function is established; and helping to ensure improved coordination across government
- strengthening relationships with Police as a means of achieving the goals of the Youth Justice plan
- working closely and collaboratively with others in the social development sector, particularly community providers; and through our leadership, ensuring vulnerable children and young people and their families have access to the “right door” at the right time.

#### **BUILDING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND ACTING ON IT**

Child, Youth and Family will undertake a continuous process of improving our ability to capture and utilise information. Doing so will enable Child, Youth and Family to develop a deeper understanding of our processes, the effectiveness of our interventions and our management for outcomes.

Over the coming year, Child, Youth and Family will further develop our ability to:

- improve the use of existing information by building in-house expertise in the development and use of analytics tools
- undertake improvements and changes to our information management system for our social work practice, to capture new data on outcomes
- link the Child, Youth and Family’s information to data captured by other agencies where appropriate, to more fully understand effectiveness and outcomes.

#### **BUILDING OUR PEOPLE CAPABILITY**

People are critical to Child, Youth and Family being able to achieve a culture of continuous learning and improvement. To ensure we have the capability to achieve our outcomes for children and young people in all we do, Child, Youth and Family will continue to focus on those systems and processes that can best enable us to recruit, develop and retain the people capability we need to deliver our services. This will include building on the strategies already in place.

In 2006/2007, we will:

- begin to develop and implement new initiatives identified in our Workforce Development strategy. This includes the continuation of initiatives from the Social Workforce Development strategy and our professionalisation strategies (see “Building our social work practice”, p 134)
- implement improvements to enhance our ability to attract and recruit high quality people to Child, Youth and Family
- continue with our Leadership and Management Development programme
- enhance the delivery of learning and career development services

- continue to build an environment and culture that engages, retains and values our people. This will include completion of the Pay and Equity Audit and Performance Management, improving our health and safety systems, and further developing core Human Resources infrastructure to provide high quality support
- recruit additional social workers through a recruitment strategy being developed including looking to source more social workers from other jurisdictions overseas
- implement initiatives that continue to develop Child, Youth and Family towards a focus on continual learning and improvement.

#### BUILDING OUR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

A key priority for achieving our outcomes for children and young people will be through enhancing the quality of social work practice. This involves a number of initiatives. They include:

- working together with the Ministry of Social Development to help build wider social work capability in the NGO/Family Support services
- professionalisation of the workforce, including recruitment of qualified staff, assisting existing staff to gain a qualification, and ensuring on-going staff development
- continuing to support staff to achieve competency and registration
- developing caseload management tools
- improving Family Group Conference processes and monitoring of plans and orders
- ensuring staff receive regular and high quality supervision and professional oversight.

To support social work practice, Child, Youth and Family is implementing a number of initiatives. These include, the Care and Protection practice framework, and strategic initiatives such as the Differential Response Model, and the Permanency policy, p 135 to 136.

#### CREATING A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A number of initiatives have been designed to strengthen our process and systems capability, and assist Child, Youth and Family's commitment to quality improvement and continuous learning. Over the next three years, work on these initiatives will include:

- continuing to build regional capability and accountability arrangements that ensure effective regional delivery of services
- developing robust and integrated planning processes and information systems
- establishing a long term programme and analytical capacity, to build our knowledge about our business, including the effectiveness of alternative interventions to achieve outcomes
- implementing the Quality Assurance Framework, to systematically guide the development and implementation of continuous improvement systems across Child, Youth and Family
- implementing initiatives that continue to develop Child, Youth and Family's commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

# focusing on continuous learning and improvement – our work

This section describes Child, Youth and Family's initiatives, at different stages of development and implementation. These are aimed at improving our services enabling us to achieve our outcomes, and a high quality in all we do.

## QUALITY SERVICES

Over the next three years the following initiatives will be crucial to continued improvement of our service quality:

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Implementation of the **Differential Response Model** for notifications of child abuse or neglect

The Differential Response Model (DRM) acknowledges that no single, prescribed response will be appropriate to all reports of child abuse or neglect. The DRM is a redesign of the way Child, Youth and Family responds to Care and Protection reports according to a menu of options outlined in proposed amendments to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 (CYP & F Act).

It also enables closer collaboration with community service providers to ensure the most appropriate response in each case. Testing of the DRM has already begun, and the model is scheduled for introduction throughout the country in early 2007.

<p>Implementation of the <b>Permanency policy</b> for children and young people in care</p>	<p>The Permanency policy, developed in 2004/2005, aims to help Child, Youth and Family build enduring living arrangements for children and young people in care, so that their sense of belonging, attachment, continuity and stability can be established.</p> <p>Children and young people who have been abused or neglected have a heightened need for security and emotional constancy, and the policy recognises the value of a lasting, nurturing primary relationship with an adult or adults.</p> <p>The policy provides a more structured and consistent framework to guide frontline social work staff in the preparation of permanency plans for children in care, including those who are being cared for by family or whānau.</p> <p>Implementation includes the provision of guidelines and training for Child, Youth and Family staff. The initial priority is the development of permanency plans for children under five.</p>
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#### OTHER INITIATIVES

<p>Development of <b>service strategies</b> to meet the needs of children, young people and their families</p>	<p>We will be developing services to provide the appropriate response to children, young people and their family's needs. This may involve both the expansion and extension of existing services delivered by community service providers, and the development of new services that effectively meet identified needs.</p>
<p>Enhancing <b>Family Group Conferences</b> and Family/Whānau Agreements</p>	<p>Family Group Conferences (FGCs) and Family/Whānau Agreements (FWAs) are key decision-making and implementation mechanisms for Child, Youth and Family and our clients. We are reviewing current practice and will implement any improvements required.</p>
<p>Implementation and further development of the <b>Practice framework</b> for social work</p>	<p>Child, Youth and Family's Care and Protection Practice framework is a key mechanism for strengthening practice with children and families in New Zealand. Designed as a tool for practitioners, the Practice framework integrates three perspectives: child-centred, family-led and culturally responsive, and strengths and evidence-based.</p> <p>As a concept, it provides stakeholders with a clear understanding of what is important to our work, how this informs our interventions with children and families, and how it links to positive outcomes for children and young people. As a tool for practitioners, it provides theoretically informed intervention logic and a set of triggers to support best practice.</p> <p>Practice frameworks will also be developed to guide practice in Youth Justice and residential care.</p>
<p>Implementation of the <b>Quality Assurance framework</b></p>	<p>The framework provides a systematic guide to development and implementation of continuous quality improvement systems across Child, Youth and Family. This involves defining, measuring and improving quality, underpinning all systems and processes of Child, Youth and Family. The process will enable Child, Youth and Family to maintain a culture of continuous learning and improvement.</p>

### CHALLENGES

Delivering excellent services requires Child, Youth and Family to function effectively and efficiently. We need to monitor and evaluate our operations, build on strengths, address weaknesses and be innovative in responses to opportunities for service improvement. As highlighted throughout this section, working effectively with others is an increasingly important part of our strategic agenda. We will be all the more effective in the wider Social and Justice sector environment, if we bring to it the credibility and expertise of a high-performing and innovative service delivery group.

### BUILDING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND ACTING ON IT

Building our knowledge about our business including the effectiveness of alternative interventions to achieve our outcomes is crucial if we are to deliver high quality services. Over the next three years, the following initiatives will be crucial to the further development of Child, Youth and Family's capacity to meet these aims.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

<p>Development of the Management Information and Systems programme</p>	<p>The Management Information and Systems programme is a suite of seven inter-related projects designed to develop Child, Youth and Family's focus on continuous learning. The programme is working towards the production of the first iteration of an integrated data store in early 2006.</p> <p>This will enable users at all management and supervisory levels to access all data relevant to their role through a single portal, regardless of the application it is processed through.</p>
<p>Implementation of Youth Justice Capability Review recommendations</p>	<p>The review is a comprehensive assessment of the capability of social workers and supervisors to deliver Youth Justice services, encompassing all staff and National Office systems and processes for Child, Youth and Family.</p> <p>Phase one identified issues with the delivery of Youth Justice services. Phase two is focused on developing a Youth Justice service process model that describes Child, Youth and Family's roles and responsibilities under current legislation. The completion of this has assisted Child, Youth and Family to define the level of resources needed to deliver Youth Justice services.</p> <p>Phase two is focused on the implementation of the service process model and associated systems and resources required to support staff to deliver quality Youth Justice services.</p>

### OTHER INITIATIVES

<p>Implementation of the Child, Youth and Family Research and Evaluation strategy</p>	<p>This strategy incorporates development of a strong capability to provide more rigorous evidence to guide decision-making. Research and evaluation have become part of the business as usual operation of Child, Youth and Family. The strategy also forms part of a wider programme which takes into account new facilities provided by, for example, the Management Information and Systems programme.</p>
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# measuring for success

Child, Youth and Family is developing a set of cost effectiveness measures for our services. We are also continuing to develop a set of outcome indicators to help us measure the contribution of our outputs towards achieving Child, Youth and Family's outcomes.

This section outlines the progress we have made in developing our cost effectiveness and outcomes measures. The outcomes measures were first outlined in our Statement of Intent for 2005/2006. In 2006/2007, sooner than for most measures, we expect to have our outcome measures confirmed and positioned to report against them.

## WORKING TOWARDS COST EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

During 2005, an analysis of its baseline was commenced for the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. The work undertaken focused on costing outputs of Child, Youth and Family's main activities for the 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 financial years. This included analysis of service demand trends, and economy and efficiency of site service delivery.

During the next year, we will continue to progress this work by developing our cost effectiveness measures. This includes identifying measures to link economy, efficiency and effectiveness; collecting data to support these measures; and gathering information on effectiveness. This work will enable Child, Youth and Family to 'manage for outcomes' using a hard evidence base of our economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

## LINKING OUTCOMES TO OUTCOME MEASURES

In order to determine how effective Child, Youth and Family's Care and Protection and Youth Justice services have been in contributing towards the achievement of our outcomes, we are continuing to develop a set of outcome indicators. Some of these were proposed and published in our Statement of Intent for 2005/2006. Our review of these indicators has considered whether they best reflect progress towards Child, Youth and Family's outcomes. As part of this process, some indicators have been confirmed (final), some are new (proposed) and others are being sought. We expect to have our outcome indicators confirmed by October 2006.

## OUTCOME INDICATORS

FREE FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	FINAL OUTCOME INDICATOR	PROPOSED OUTCOME INDICATOR
To prevent the recurrence of child abuse, neglect and insecurity of care	Re-substantiation of abuse, neglect or insecurity of care	
That the effects of harm are addressed		<p>An appropriate indicator is being investigated.</p> <p>Our review of last year's indicator <i>"FGC plans/FWAs/Court Orders completed and objectives met"</i> has found that while we capture data on this indicator, it does not appropriately measure progress towards this outcome.</p> <p>An appropriate indicator is being investigated.</p>
To prevent the first occurrence of abuse, neglect or insecurity of care		<p>Our review of last year's indicator <i>"Percentage of cases that are referred to a third party organisation (prior to investigation) that are not re-notified"</i> has found that while we capture this data, the indicator itself does not appropriately measure progress towards this outcome.</p>
To restore or improve wellbeing (including achieving permanency and stability)		<p>Improvement in developmental milestones (including for children in care) along educational attainment, behaviour and health dimensions.</p> <p>Proportion (%) of children in care placed with their family or whānau.</p> <p>Proportion (%) of cases in which the objectives of permanency plans are met.</p>

## OUTCOME INDICATORS

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FREE FROM OFFENDING	FINAL OUTCOME INDICATOR	PROPOSED OUTCOME INDICATOR
To reduce the rate and severity of child and youth offending	Rate of offending Rate of re-offending Severity of re-offending	
To hold young people to account for offending		Victim perception of whether the offender has been held to account for their offending following the Family Group Conference (FGC) Offender perception of whether they have been held to account for their offending following the FGC
To restore or improve wellbeing		An appropriate indicator is being investigated. Our review of last year's proposed indicator " <i>The objectives of the Youth Justice FGC or Court Order have been met</i> " has found that this indicator does not appropriately measure progress towards this outcome.

# managing our risks

This section describes the key risks to Child, Youth and Family and how we address these risks.

## WHY WE MANAGE RISKS

Serving New Zealand's most vulnerable children and young people is a demanding task with significant risks for Child, Youth and Family. To have confidence in Child, Youth and Family's services, our stakeholders need to be assured that we have risk management embedded in our business practices. We achieve this by applying our risk management policy to our strategic and operational planning and management. We are developing a culture of continuous learning and improvement, where risks are identified and solutions to mitigate them are explored.

The risks faced by Child, Youth and Family fall into four broad categories, relating to our:

- operating environment
- business processes
- people capability
- financial management.

**OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

Child, Youth and Family operates in a complex environment where internal and external influences have a significant impact on our ability to respond to vulnerable children and young people. These influences may interrupt, delay or otherwise impede the delivery and development of effective services.

RISK	RESPONSE
<p>If we do not adequately respond to the diverse needs of our clients, we risk not being able to achieve our outcomes – keeping children and young people safe from abuse, neglect or offending.</p>	<p>We are developing and implementing a number of initiatives to meet our clients' needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Differential Response Model in action will provide options for responding to Care and Protection reports, and will enable closer collaboration with community service providers.</li> <li>• The Family Group Conference and Family/Whānau Agreements, enables the child or young person to have a voice in key decision-making affecting them, and the family or whānau; and in the case of offending, enable victims to engage in the decision-making process also.</li> <li>• Social Workers in Schools is an early intervention and prevention programme targeted at year 0 – 8 children, and their families in low decile schools.</li> <li>• The Family Safety Teams are expected to strengthen the criminal justice response to family violence and encourage better use of services such as, protection orders, counselling, income, housing, education and health support, by matching family needs to locally available services.</li> </ul>
<p>If we do not work closely and collaboratively with other agencies we may risk being unaware of the effects that the actions of each agency can have on demand for our services and vice versa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child, Youth and Family is committed to working closely and collaboratively with its partners, at the strategic and operational levels.</li> <li>• We support an emphasis on a whole of government approach to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.</li> </ul>
<p>If we do not inform our stakeholders of our role, including the public, we risk an ability to act effectively in the community.</p>	<p>Our work in this area includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Workers in Schools (see above).</li> <li>• Everyday Communities programme which raises awareness of child abuse and assists the development of prevention strategies through, for example, community engagement.</li> </ul>

RISK	RESPONSE
Managing current and forecast demand	<p>Child, Youth and Family is realigning its Demand Management strategy in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• better manage intake and investigation through the implementation of robust systems</li> <li>• achieve greater consistency of responses.</li> </ul> <p>Progress is also being made around enhancing decision-making and judgement at the point of intake in the call centre and sites.</p> <p>Family violence and police notifications are the main drivers of demand. A range of initiatives are underway to improve effectiveness in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementation of the Family Safety Team pilots</li> <li>• development of cross sector initiatives with ministers and officials from Police, Health, Education and Social Development (refer to the External Review, p 122).</li> </ul>

#### BUSINESS PROCESS

Business process risks are those associated with the core processes and systems that enable Child, Youth and Family to deliver its services. We pay attention to risks around the efficiency and effectiveness of our systems and processes.

RISK	RESPONSE
If our systems and processes do not provide staff with effective and efficient ways to support their work, we risk non-compliance, the inability to meet our stakeholders' needs, and non-productive use of staff time.	<p>We are developing and implementing a number of initiatives to strengthen our systems and processes. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementation of the Management Information and Systems programme to enable management staff to access data relevant to their role through a single portal.</li> <li>• introduction (in 2005/2006) of a cross-Child, Youth and Family management group that meets regularly to facilitate the co-ordination of the strategic and business planning and financial management processes across Child, Youth and Family.</li> <li>• introduction (in 2005/2006) of a cross-group forum conducted at a senior level, to oversee the co-ordination and integration of developments within our information management systems programmes.</li> </ul> <p>On-going research and evaluation work of our service effectiveness will feed into on-going service development and improvement initiatives.</p>
We may not be able to sufficiently respond to client demand for our services owing to either a disproportionate increase in the demand and available resources to meet that demand; or our inflexibility in how we manage the increasing demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our on-going research into the drivers of demand will help inform our understanding of these to more accurately forecast increases or decreases.</li> <li>• Working closely with strategic partners, for example, the Police, will also help us improve our understanding of how their work may impact on levels of demand for our services.</li> </ul>

**PEOPLE CAPABILITY**

Capability risks relate to the ability of our staff to deliver consistently high-quality services to all our clients.

RISK	RESPONSE
We may have a reduced capability in parts of Child, Youth and Family owing to recruitment and retention issues including shortage of appropriately qualified and/or experienced staff.	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to recruit staff with the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience</li> <li>• continue to implement our leaders’ and managers’ strategy for building capability.</li> </ul> <p>Our focus on learning and development assists staff in gaining the qualifications and skills necessary for their roles (in respect of social workers, p 136).</p>
High market demand for some sets of skills and experience means we may have difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, particularly experienced staff.	<p>We will continue to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging the learning and development of our staff through, for example, payment of study awards and study advance agreements, and paid study leave</li> <li>• building a positive working environment</li> <li>• building our understanding of the marketplace for skills sets and experience</li> <li>• addressing remuneration.</li> </ul>

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Financial management risks relate to the availability of adequate funding for Child, Youth and Family operations. The chief risk in this area is that demand for our services might put excessive pressure on our budget.

RISK	RESPONSE
In a fiscally tight environment, we risk our financial resources not meeting the actual demand for our services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts to increase our understanding of the drivers of demand for our services, will enable us to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– forecast, plan and manage demand for our services more effectively</li> <li>– have accurate information to discuss our resource needs with influential stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Our emphasis on strategic prioritisation of resources as part of the annual planning and financial management process, helps us to increase our understanding of financial pressures and enables us to manage these more effectively.</li> <li>• Further refinement of a financial management tool will enhance the integration of business planning and financial management.</li> </ul>