



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

# Information and Advice Service Guidelines

## Contents

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About the Guidelines .....	1
1. Introduction .....	1
2. Purpose of the guidelines .....	1
3. Using the guidelines .....	1
4. Guideline reviews.....	1
Working Together .....	2
1. Relationship principles .....	2
2. Cultural responsiveness .....	2
3. Good practice approaches .....	2
4. Results-based accountability (RBA) .....	3
Service Overview .....	4
1. Service summary .....	4
2. Background .....	4
3. Purpose of information and advice .....	4
4. Outcomes / results .....	5
5. Reporting measures .....	5
6. Units of measure.....	6
7. Provider reports.....	6
Service Delivery .....	7
1. Providing services .....	7
2. Information and advice standards .....	7
3. Resources .....	8
4. Networking and collaboration .....	8
Appendix 1 .....	9
Provider Feedback Form.....	9

# About the Guidelines

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 These guidelines ('the guidelines') are for the provider that the Ministry of Social Development ('the Ministry') contracts with to provide these services. The guidelines form part of the Outcome Agreement.
- 1.2 Outcome Agreements with providers for these services require that they are delivered in accordance with the guidelines. The guidelines are a living document and may be varied at the discretion of the Ministry. The Ministry will inform the provider of any variation to be made to the guidelines.

## 2. Purpose of the guidelines

- 2.1 The guidelines have been developed to assist Family Service Centres stakeholders by providing:
  - a) detailed information about service delivery and practice in a more easy-to-read format than is possible to include in an Outcome Agreement
  - b) a resource tool to help providers deliver services consistently and in line with the national goals
  - c) a way for the Ministry to improve its responsiveness to feedback regarding changes to the service delivery component of the Outcome Agreement

## 3. Using the guidelines

- 3.1 The guidelines should be seen as setting the minimum standard from which the provider can develop a service that reflects their organisation's philosophical base, incorporating local need and the culture within which the provider works. The provider should use the guidelines to assist them to competently deliver the service.

## 4. Guideline reviews

- 4.1 The guidelines are reviewed on a regular basis. The review process ensures that the:
  - a) guidelines reflect the most current decisions of the Government that affect the service and the activities being funded
  - b) reporting measures are up-to-date, relevant and collecting the most useful information on service delivery and effectiveness.
- 4.2 The provider is invited to participate in the review of the guidelines. Feedback on these can be sent at any time using the feedback form in Appendix 1. In addition, providers will be contacted prior to the review and invited to engage on the reporting measures and usability of the document.

# Working Together

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## 1. Relationship principles

- 1.1 Both parties shall collaborate to ensure the services are effective and accessible. In so doing they recognise that the service is a joint endeavour, in which both parties have a shared goal to achieve positive benefits for the target group.
- 1.2 The following principles guide all our dealings under the Outcome Agreement. Both parties agree to:
  - a) act honestly and in good faith
  - b) communicate openly and in a timely manner
  - c) work in a collaborative and constructive manner
  - d) recognise each other's responsibilities
  - e) encourage quality and innovation to achieve positive outcomes.
- 1.3 Both parties shall appoint contract managers who will be responsible for effectively managing the contract relationship between us, by providing assistance and support as required. Details of the contract managers nominated by both parties are set out in the Outcome Agreement.

## 2. Cultural responsiveness

- 2.1 Both parties recognise the needs of all people, including Māori, Pacific, ethnic communities and all other communities, to have services provided in a way that is consistent with their social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual values.

## 3. Good practice approaches

- 3.1 Both parties support the development of good practice in the delivery of the service.
- 3.2 This includes:
  - a) basing the service on current good practice approaches, taking into account the local context and community and the knowledge and skills relevant to the purpose and focus of this service
  - b) being client focused – including:
    - o recognising the importance of cultural responsiveness in service delivery
    - o designing services and physical facilities in a way that supports accessibility to services for clients.
  - c) using a collaborative approach across services and agencies where possible
  - d) undertaking regular review, reflection and monitoring of the effectiveness of the service, including client, staff and external feedback, and changing and modifying practice in response
  - e) ensuring that formal feedback processes are used for reporting purposes and that clients participating in them are aware of how the information they provide will be used

- f) undertaking relevant professional development and (where appropriate) supervision
  - g) engaging with a 'community of practice' to share ideas, information and build professional practice knowledge.
- 3.3 The Ministry has established an area for good practice information on the Ministry website.

## 4. Results-based accountability (RBA)

- 4.1 The Ministry has adopted a Results-Based Accountability approach to contract reporting and monitoring. This approach uses a simple framework to help the Ministry and providers focus on achieving positive outcomes / results. This approach means the Ministry can work better with the provider to ensure that programmes are effective and achieving the right outcomes for individuals, families and communities.
- 4.2 RBA identifies two types of accountability that are interconnected:
- population accountability: which is focused on high-level outcomes for a particular population (e.g. a specific demographic or geographic community)
  - performance accountability: this is focused at the service delivery and client outcome level which contributes to population outcomes. Performance accountability has a dual emphasis on ensuring that agencies deliver the type and volume of services they are contracted to deliver and that these services are achieving the expected results.
- 4.3 The Ministry's Outcome Agreements mainly require reporting information on performance accountability, and will ask the provider to report on three types of measures:
- accountability measures: how much did we do? How well did we do it?
  - outcome / result measures: was anyone better off?
  - audience measures: measures that we are required to report on for a specific reason (eg it is a government requirement, or the information is being collected for a specific purpose)
- 4.4 The first two types of measures are developed through the RBA process, while audience measures are reporting requirements the Ministry has as a government agency with responsibility for public funds.
- 4.5 The data is backed up by a narrative report which forms part of the Outcome Agreement. A guide to writing the narrative report is found in the list of reporting measures contained in these guidelines as well as in the Outcome Agreement.
- 4.6 More information on RBA can be found at:  
<http://www.procurement.govt.nz/procurement/for-agencies/buying-social-services/results-based-accountabilitytm-rba/>

# Service Overview

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## 1. Service summary

Target group definition

Families/whānau and individuals in the community who need Information and Advice Services.

Outcomes / results we expect to achieve

- clients have ready access to information and advice they seek
- information and advice is accessible, up to date, complete and relevant
- information and advice provided increases the abilities of families/whānau and individuals to meet their own personal and social needs.

Services

Information and advice covers a wide range of activities and may include:

- community resource centres and other local information services
- specialist help lines
- specialist sexual abuse, rape and family violence prevention services
- social service agencies where information and advice is one among a range of services provided.

Social Sector Accreditation Standards

Providers delivering Information and Advice service are required to meet Level Four, Ministry of Social Development specific accreditation standards. Providers are required to maintain their Accreditation Level according to the Ministry's relevant Social Sector Accreditation Standards.

## 2. Background

2.1 The service was established to empower families by increasing access to information about available services, particularly in communities where access to social and support services is minimal, or where there is high demand for support.

## 3. Purpose of information and advice

3.1 Information and Advice Services aim to assist people in the community, including families/whānau and individuals, to have access to up-to-date and relevant information and advice to meet their personal and welfare needs.

## 4. Outcomes / results

4.1 The expected outcomes / results for the service are:

- clients have ready access to information and advice they seek
- information and advice provided is accessible, up to date, complete and relevant
- information and advice provided increases the abilities of families/whānau and individuals to meet their own personal and social needs

## 5. Reporting measures

5.1 The reporting measures for this service are listed below. Provider Return Report templates are contained in the outcome agreement.

Type of measure		Measures
Output Measure	Quantity How much?	Number of clients who received the service
	Quality How well?	Percentage of people delivering the service who received training and regular supervision
Outcome / Result Measure	Effectiveness Is anyone better off?	

### Narrative Report

1. What is the “story behind the data”? (e.g. environmental factors impacting on client results including issues, gaps, overlaps and trends).
2. What are your areas for improvement towards achieving better results for clients (continuous improvement)?
3. Who are your partners that help you achieve results, and what joint activities have you participated in?
4. What combination of services do you think is most effective for your clients?
5. Provide examples of strategies or practices used to encourage ‘hard to reach’ clients to engage.
6. Provide an explanation of the variances (if any) between the volumes contracted and volumes delivered.

## 6. Units of measure

- 6.1 The contracted volume measure for Information and Advice Services is 'clients'.
- 6.2 A client is defined as an individual (and/or their family/whānau) who agrees to engage with the provider (as relevant to the circumstances of the client).
- 6.3 The Information and Advice Outcome Agreement specifies minimum activity volumes.

## 7. Provider reports

- 7.1 Reports are necessary to ensure accountability to Government for the funding provided in the terms of the Information and Advice outcome.
- 7.2 The Ministry has agreed on the quantity and nature of the services that government funding supports, and we are required to report to Government that this has been achieved.
- 7.3 During the term of this outcome agreement, you will need to send the following reports about the provision of the services to the contract manager on the due dates specified in the Output agreement:
  - Provider Return Report including Statistical and Narrative Report (refer to the outcome agreement for reporting frequency).
  - Annual independently audited financial accounts.
  - Establishment Report (only where required).
- 7.4 Reports may be made available electronically where we have established such reporting facilities. Alternatively, reports may be provided in the format specified in the Outcome Agreement.
- 7.5 Family Services Directory

Through the term of the Outcome Agreement with the Ministry, Providers must ensure that their organisation is listed on the Ministry's Family Services Directory (<https://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/>), and that necessary information is updated when required.



# Service Delivery

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## 1. Providing services

- 1.1 Information and Advice Services covers a wide range of activities and may include:
- community resource centres and other local information providers e.g. Pregnancy Help
  - specialist help lines such as Lifeline, Youthline and Citizens Advice Bureau
  - specialist sexual abuse, rape and family violence prevention services
  - social service agencies where information and advice is one among a range of services provided.
- 1.2 Services may be provided:
- over the counter at the Centre
  - in a private setting at the Centre
  - via phone or an internet site.
- 1.3 We expect you to provide relevant, up-to- date information and advice to people seeking assistance on an immediate short- term, reception-type basis. This may include advice regarding where and how to access other appropriate support services, information about local government and non-government agencies, and the provision of resource materials and how to use them.
- 1.4 You will need to ensure that any personal issues raised by clients are handled sensitively, and that all staff are aware of the importance of client confidentiality and follow established procedures to protect it.

## 2. Information and advice standards

- 2.1 You may need to lease or have purchased suitable premises to provide Information and Advice Services.
- 2.2 You will need to engage suitable staff and ensure that they have access to the resources they need to provide accurate, up-to-date information and advice to clients.
- 2.3 In establishing and maintaining Information and Advice Services that are open to the public, you are expected to:
- ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to access services according to their needs
  - ensure facilities are open to the public
  - adequately equip the Centre with all the necessary amenities
  - brief staff and agencies on emergency and evacuation procedures
  - incorporate a privacy statement about collecting client information into your value statement
  - develop procedures to protect client confidentiality.

### 3. Resources

3.1 It is important that you produce, collate and maintain up-to-date information depending on the service you provide, such as:

- information on specialist topics relevant to your service
- local, regional and national support service
- social agencies and avenues of assistance
- special interest groups.

3.2 You will need to review your information regularly to ensure sufficient stocks are available and it remains relevant and up to date.

### 4. Networking and collaboration

4.1 Successful Information and Advice Services need to be supported by relationships with other agencies that can provide additional specialist support to clients if required.

4.2 We expect that Information and Advice Service providers will actively network, build connections, collaborate and maintain effective working relationships with other relevant service providers and stakeholders who may be able to provide complementary assistance to families/whānau and individuals as necessary.

# Appendix 1

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## Provider Feedback Form

Please email to your Contract Manager		
Suggested change to the Information and Advice Services guidelines (including appendices)		
Topic	Reference (section/page)	Suggested change/description
Contact Name:		Position:
Provider name:		
Provider postal address:		
Provider email:		
Provider phone:		Date: