

How can government improve results for our most vulnerable (at-risk) children and their families?

A Request for Information – Your thoughts on 4-5 pages

Important Note:

This Request for Information will not result in contract award, nor will it be used to exclude or pre-qualify respondents for any future procurement processes.

Your ideas will help us to identify ways to improve the lives of children and their families most at risk of poor education, employment and criminal justice outcomes.

Deadline: 5pm, 4 December 2014



THE TREASURY

Kaitohutohu Kaupapa Rawa

New Zealand Government

How can the government improve results for at-risk New Zealanders?

The Government wants to continue to enable vulnerable New Zealanders to achieve success and contribute to their communities. There are already a lot of supports, services and programmes available including new innovative services. For most people existing supports work well but the most troubled and at-risk children and families with multiple complex problems could make more progress with better government support.

We know that effective, early interventions can present much better results for individuals including reduced contact with the justice, welfare and health systems and reduced cost to government. Solving difficult social problems means a long-term focus on root causes, and ensuring that existing government services work together to provide effective and sustained support.

This Request for Information seeks your input into how the Government can improve results for the most at-risk children and their families.

Smarter social investment to improve results

The Government is investing in lifting long-term results through clarity about the key measurable results, flexibility to target interventions where they are needed most, and using evaluation and evidence to test, learn and adapt.

There is scope for government programmes to be more effective on all these aspects, in particular to improve the information we have about how existing interventions fit together, to test and evaluate innovative approaches to service delivery, and to improve the ways we target and measure results (for example, through outcomes-based contracts).

Who do we want to focus on?

We want to focus on how to get better results for children and their families *at most risk of poor education, criminal justice and employment outcomes*. They will probably have multiple risk factors, including being:

- children vulnerable to abuse or neglect
- unsupported/vulnerable teen parents
- children and young people with conduct problems
- children needing a range of services to succeed in school
- people not in safe, secure housing
- children in families with gang connections
- children in families with prison connections
- violent families, including victims and perpetrators.

What works in your community?

Government has developed more flexible solutions to find a better fit for the specific circumstances of individual families and local communities. The Government wants to be able to consider how it could deliver better results for our most vulnerable people by focusing on what would make the most difference in specific communities, or by developing individualised services. There are examples of good local initiatives that can be built on including Social Sector Trials, Children's Teams and Whānau Ora.

The outcomes we look for are healthy, safe, self-reliant families who can realise their potential supported by effective health and education services and a strong, growing economy providing new jobs.

What are we looking for?

At this point we are seeking information to help us understand how existing government programmes could more effectively improve results for the most at-risk children and their families (refer to page 3 for detailed questions).

We are seeking your input to identify what existing services and innovations work and where they could be improved. This will help us to identify ways to improve the effectiveness of existing services and models, particularly in the most deprived areas (e.g. parts of Auckland, Northland and the East Coast).

Who do we want to hear from?

We are seeking information from a range of groups and individuals including providers (for profit and not-for-profit), community groups, iwi, frontline officials and academics.

How can you contribute?

- A template for response is attached as Appendix A. A Word version of the template is available from <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/socialinvestment>
- Provide maximum 5 pages (no more than 10 A4 sides) with text in font size of at least 10 points
- Email your template response as a Word document or PDF to socialinvestment@treasury.govt.nz
- Deadline: 5pm, 4 December 2014
- For any questions please email: socialinvestment@treasury.govt.nz

What will happen to your response?

The ideas and information you provide will be used by government agencies and Ministers to identify where existing services can be improved, or where new local services can be trialled. Initiatives could be funded through new spending or reprioritising existing expenditure in the Government's 2015 Budget.

The RFI Opportunity – What we are looking for

What we are most interested in

We are particularly interested in hearing your ideas about how to improve education, criminal justice and employment results of at-risk children and their families.

More info: Appendix B includes information that relates to some of the issues and groups that we are most interested in.

What we are looking for

Please provide responses to one or more of the questions below.

A: What works best to identify and engage the children and their families most at-risk of poor education, criminal justice and employment outcomes?

For example...

- what are successful ways to find and engage the most hard to reach children and families?

And/Or

B: How could existing services or supports be improved to make the biggest difference to children and their families at most risk of poor education, criminal justice and employment outcomes?

For example...

- how could existing services be better delivered? (this could include services directly provided by government, or by private or not-for-profit providers or other groups)
- what would need to change to improve the effectiveness of services for the most at-risk groups?

And/Or

C: What issues or problems are not currently being addressed that increase the risks to some children of not achieving in education or employment?

For example...

- what are the particular issues in your community?
- are there any services needed which aren't currently available? What are they?
- are the underlying causes of poor outcomes being addressed?

And/Or

D: What interventions, services or arrangements could make the biggest difference for at-risk children and their families?

For example...

- what existing models used in New Zealand or internationally could be used in your area?
- how can services respond to the complexity and diversity of family circumstances?
- how can the government better target and measure results for at-risk children and their families? (e.g. through outcomes-based contracts)

We need to test whether new services or models are likely to be effective. This includes the theory of change or intervention logic, the potential costs and benefits, and whether any evidence supports the idea. **It would be helpful if you could include references to supporting evidence.**

RFI Terms and Conditions

1. The primary purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to seek general information that will assist us in further defining options to improve results for children at-risk of poor education, criminal justice and employment outcomes.
2. The issue of, and response to, this RFI is not to be construed as representing or creating any binding obligation on the Treasury to enter into any legal commitment whatsoever or as being a commitment by the Treasury to make any purchase.
3. By responding to this RFI, you accept the terms and conditions of this RFI and the RFI process.
4. The Treasury is not liable (whether in contract, tort or otherwise) for any liability, loss (including a direct, indirect, or consequential loss), cost or expense arising from any response or from the preparation or lodgement of any response or the clarification or amendment of a response. The Treasury is also not liable for any such liability, loss, cost or expense arising from the cancellation, suspension, re-issuing or amendment of this RFI.
5. Responses must comprise of one digital response in PDF or Microsoft Word format using the template supplied, emailed to the address in this RFI before the deadline.
6. All response documents will become the Treasury's property on lodgement.
7. If your RFI response doesn't conform to the requirements stated in this RFI, we may not consider your response. Specifically, we might not read attachments that we did not request.
8. Ownership of the intellectual property rights does not pass to the Treasury on lodgement of your response. In submitting your response, you grant us a license to retain, use, disclose and copy the information contained in any response document for the purpose of:
 - a. clarifying the response
 - b. analysing the response
 - c. responding to any challenge in the RFI process, audit and complying with governmental and parliamentary reporting requirements or request for information
 - d. any other purpose related to the RFI process or above purposes.
9. If your response contains information that you consider confidential please clearly identify it and explain why it is confidential. Be aware that information held by the Treasury can be subject to requests under the Official Information Act 1982.
10. The Treasury will comply with its obligations under the Privacy Act 1993. You should consider whether any of the information you are providing is covered by the Privacy Act 1993 and treat that information in accordance with the requirements of that Act.
11. You may request clarification about the RFI by emailing the address in this RFI. Any response is at the Treasury's sole discretion. If the Treasury provides information to you that is applicable to all potential Respondents then the Treasury may notify others of this information through the Government Electronic Tendering System.

12. The Treasury reserves the right to:
 - a. ask you for further information or to verify information received in your response
 - b. consider, accept or reject non-conforming responses
 - c. suspend or cancel the RFI process at any time
 - d. re-invite responses
 - e. seek additional responses
 - f. waive any irregularities in the RFI process
 - g. amend any timetable in the RFI
 - h. amend this RFI by the issue of a written notice.

Appendix A: Response template

How can government improve outcomes for our most vulnerable (at-risk) children and their families?

Please write your response in the template below.

Please note:

- you **do not** need to answer all sections – just the ones where you have information you would like to contribute
- please expand or delete boxes as you need to. Please provide no more than 5 double sided pages of text and font size of at least 10 points.
- please **do not** send us reports or other documents but **do** include references or links to supporting evidence or information
- please submit your response to socialinvestment@treasury.govt.nz by 5pm, 4 December 2014.

Thank you for your time and effort in providing this information.

Part 1: Your contact details and response summary

Organisation Name:	
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Contact Person Name:	
Position:	
Phone number:	
Email address:	

What geographical location does your response relate to?	
What group of people or issues is your response targeted towards?	
Does your response relate to a new service or modification of existing services?	

Part 2: Your RFI response

A: What works best to identify and engage the children and their families most at-risk of poor education, criminal justice and employment outcomes?

For example...

- what are successful ways to find and engage the most hard to reach children and families?

And/Or

B: How could existing services or supports be improved to make the biggest difference to children and their families at most risk of poor education, criminal justice and employment outcomes?

For example...

- how could existing services be better delivered? (this could include services directly provided by government, or by private or not-for-profit providers or other groups)
- what would need to change to improve the effectiveness of services for the most at-risk groups?

And/Or

C: What issues or problems are not currently being addressed that increase the risks to some children of not achieving in education or employment?

For example...

- what are the particular issues in your community?
- are there any services needed which aren't currently available? What are they?
- are the underlying causes of poor outcomes being addressed?

And/Or

D: What interventions, services or arrangements could make the biggest difference for at-risk children and their families?

For example...

- what existing models used in New Zealand or internationally could be used in your area?
- how can services respond to the complexity and diversity of family circumstances?
- how can the government better target and measure results for at-risk children and their families? (e.g. through outcomes-based contracts)

Appendix B: The target group – children and their families at-risk of poor education, criminal justice and employment outcomes

We have used the information and knowledge of government agencies to identify the groups of people that we are most interested in, what we know about these groups and the services available for them. There are already a range of initiatives and services provided by government, local communities, social sector NGOs, and local government.

We have heard that for the group of people that we are interested in focusing on (the most at-risk):

- the issues are about the family, not just an individual
- these families are experiencing material deprivation and this is combined with family problems, family stress or a lack of family support
- no single professional or service will be able to address all of a family's needs
- these families may not easily trust people working for government agencies, and/or have issues dealing with service providers
- these families may be unaware of, or unable to directly access services they need
- low level risk factors may not be picked up early enough.

In our discussions with providers and with government agencies there is a recurrent theme that for the most at-risk families, current services are not always able to respond to the complexity and diversity of family circumstances, including:

- social services can find it difficult to engage people, especially those with complex needs
- vulnerable people can be 'hard to reach' or the available services can be unattractive
- once engaged with services some families have complex needs that require additional help
- there are gaps in services and places where services are not able to meet local demand
- government agencies often find it difficult to co-operate in a way that leads to effective action on the ground
- agencies find it difficult to have practical data sharing arrangements and to share information on families.

The Government is already working in new and better ways to meet the needs of families more effectively. We are open to hearing about how current initiatives could be improved to better fit local needs for these families. For your reference, some of the services/initiatives that may be in your community and a brief explanation of each are listed below. You may also provide suggestions for improvements to services not included in this list.

Target group	What we know about the group	Examples of existing services and interventions
Children vulnerable to abuse or neglect	<p>The White Paper for Vulnerable Children estimated that each year there are around 20,000- 30,000 children at-risk of or experiencing child abuse or neglect. Around half of these children currently receive a statutory intervention from Child, Youth and Family.</p> <p>There are specific factors that accumulate and can make a child more vulnerable and these factors can change as a child grows up.</p> <p>There are two periods when children are especially vulnerable: when they are very young and when they enter adolescence.</p>	<p>Child, Youth and Family has the main responsibility for services for children at-risk of, or experiencing abuse or neglect.</p> <p>Children’s Teams aim to bring practitioners and professionals together to wrap services around vulnerable children. The first two are in Rotorua and Whangarei.</p> <p>Other government agencies also play a role in identifying children vulnerable to abuse and neglect and providing services to these families.</p>
Unsupported/ vulnerable teen parents	<p>New Zealand has a high fertility rate for 15-19 year olds (25 per 1000 in 2012). In 2012, 13% of teen mothers who gave birth were aged under 18. The teen birth rate in the most deprived areas of New Zealand is 6.5 times higher than in the rate in the least deprived.</p>	<p>Supports for teen parents include Youth Parent Payment, Teen Parent Units in schools, and other services targeted at teen parents.</p> <p>Sexual and reproductive health services and antenatal and postnatal services also have a role in identifying and supporting teen parents.</p>
Children and young people with conduct disorder	<p>A report of the Chief Science Advisor has estimated that 5% of children and young people have significant levels of conduct problems.</p> <p>Conduct problems in childhood (and adolescence), have profound consequences for later development including antisocial behaviour, crime, mental health difficulties, suicidal behaviours, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, inter-partner violence and physical health.</p>	<p>Services include Early Intervention Services for children with learning, behavioural or communication needs, Incredible Years, Attendance Services, Health Camps, and Study Support Centres.</p>

Target group	What we know about the group	Examples of existing services and interventions
Children needing a range of services to succeed in school	<p>A Level 2 qualification gives people opportunities in terms of further education, employment, health outcomes and a better quality of life. Of those most at-risk of not achieving NCEA Level 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87% Primary caregiver with less than NCEA Level 1 • 84% Children of parents/caregivers who received a benefit • 64% CYF notification • 63% Māori • 53% Domiciled in highly deprived areas • 36% Enrolled in low decile schools • 27% Any number of stand downs/suspensions before Year 9 • 26% CYF finding of abuse or neglect • 23% Poor attendance in Year 9 • 14% Non-enrolled Truancy Service involvement • 13% Ongoing Resourcing Scheme funded • 12% Orphans • 10% Children of sole parents. 	<p>In the early years there are programmes to increase ECE participation for high risk groups.</p> <p>Youth Guarantee provides young people with alternative opportunities for education success.</p> <p>Behaviour Support Services for young people with intellectual disabilities.</p> <p>Specific services support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.</p> <p>Attendance Service deals with truancy referrals from schools and helps learners not at schools to re-engage.</p> <p>Intensive Wrap Around Service for a small number of children with highly complex learning and behaviour needs.</p>
People not in safe and secure housing	<p>At the 2013 Census approximately 21,000 children were in temporary accommodation including motor camps, mobile dwellings and boarding houses.</p>	<p>Auckland-wide Healthy Homes Initiative identifies children who are at-risk of developing rheumatic fever and offers a package of housing-related interventions to reduce their risks.</p> <p>Social housing referrals by the Ministry of Social Development. Priority given to children at risk of rheumatic fever.</p> <p>Youth Service can assist 16 and 17 year old clients with housing options.</p>

Target group	What we know about the group	Examples of existing services and interventions
Violent families	<p>The Dunedin Longitudinal Study found that a quarter of young adults had been exposed to acts or threats of violence carried out by one parent against another, and about 80% were exposed to the violence before age 11.</p> <p>In 2012/13 Women's Refuges received 81,720 crisis calls and 2,940 women and children stayed in safe houses.</p>	<p>The Government contracts for family violence services aimed at prevention and early intervention, crisis response, treatment and counselling.</p> <p>DHB screening for partner or child abuse.</p>
Interventions targeting multiple needs		<p>Social Sector Trials test what happens when a local organisation or individual directs cross-agency resources, as well as local organisations and government agencies, to deliver collaborative social services.</p> <p>Whānau Ora Commissioning Agencies: commissioning improvements in whānau capability.</p>