

Submission re more effective Social Services

Communication

I consider there needs to be more effective Social Services by increasing communication across different government departments and not using the Privacy Act as a reason not to share relevant and pertinent information which will benefit the affected parties.

Staff

I commend staff who give unstintingly of their time, wisdom and expertise to assist families and in particular, children who are vulnerable and need care, protection and support as they raise their resilience levels and get back in to coping mode.

I understand that staff dealing with these kind of situations constantly become exhausted, even cynical, as they rarely see apparent success from the interventions set in place by social services.

More resources need to be put in place to support social services staff so they do not become burnt out and get time to reflect on their practice eg by having independent individual supervision as well as group & peer supervision regularly.

Staff levels need to be lifted in light of the urgent need to address issues created in families by insufficient income from either low level benefits or low paying jobs. These circumstances create huge pressure on families, especially when there are other issues eg health and addiction issues such as alcohol, smoking or drugs.

These can take a long time to resolve and continued commitment by many branches of social services working in collaboration- to be commended.

Collaboration

This method of service delivery is essential to ensure positive outcomes for people who have to use social services. Sharing information, working together with the families and doing this before they are in extreme crisis is the best use of resources.

Stories

Families and people who need social services need to hear positive stories of how others have been able to move beyond dependency so they can hold some hope as it can be very dark for people when they find themselves- often through no fault of their own- in a situation of reliance on some form of social service.

Staff will also be encouraged when they hear success stories and so enthused to continue their work as they make a difference.

Working with NGOs.

Government Social Services departments will find it beneficial to work with NGOs as they have many skills related to helping vulnerable people in our society. Their wisdom and ability to be involved for

a longer period of time is beneficial for all concerned and can relieve the pressure on social service agencies.

Working with Community groups/ people in the community eg neighbours

We must never under- estimate the value of community, such as neighbours, families, whanau, marae, Lions Clubs, Rotary, Rural Women, Fire Brigade, sports clubs, Victim support, Women's Refuge, churches, multi nations, community workers, Neighbourhood Watch as they do a lot of social services in the community and need to be seen as a support network for those in need of social services. They have a lot of local knowledge, wisdom and expertise about how to support others who are vulnerable.

Social Services need a list of the key people in these community groups and how they can work together to benefit all.

We are the community and just as it takes a whole community to raise a child, so it takes a whole community to support the vulnerable and deprived. We are responsible for seeing everyone can participate in the community as a valued and essential part of our social fabric.

He iti, he pounamu. It may be small but it is precious.

Nau to rourou, naku te rouroru, ka ora te iwi.

From your food basket and my food basket, there is plenty for everyone.

Kia kaha.

Jenny Campbell, QSM