

21. OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMME DRAFT STRATEGY AND AREA IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

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The purpose of this report is to provide information to Community Boards on the draft Out of School Programme Strategy and to also provide local Area Implementation Plans to assist staff and Community Board members identify priority needs for after school and holiday programmes in their area (refer attached documents).

The Strategy and Area Implementation Plans are intended to cover a three year period from 2002 to 2005.

The final Strategy will be presented to the Board in March 2002 after appropriate consultation with key stakeholders has been undertaken.

BACKGROUND

An Out of School Policy was adopted by the Christchurch City Council in 1999 with a recommendation that strategic plans for its implementation were developed for each Community Board area. As part of the policy consultation process some Community Boards also requested clearer funding criteria specifying what Boards should provide and how, both with regard to funding Council provision and to meeting requests from community groups.

Methodology/Process

The Out of School Programme Strategy and Area Implementation Plans were prepared based on the following:

- Relevant metropolitan research;
- Local research (Community Board);
- Preliminary strategy work undertaken by researcher Sarah Wylie;
- Expertise of relevant Council staff;
- Input from out of school programme providers; and
- Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) network (local and national branches).

The Strategy and Area Implementation Plans provide information and direction for the Council to achieve the Out of School Programme Policy.

The Area Implementation Plans provide the following information:

- Current provision and current Council involvement per ward area;
- Relevant local research;
- Local themes and issues; and
- Financial recommendations in the context of the strategy intended to cover a three year period (2002-2005).

The Draft Out of School Strategy sets out the city-wide context of the out of school programme sector, along with Council's current involvement. It provides information on benefits and identifies common issues, objectives and what action should occur. It also provides a framework from which funding and resourcing priorities can be identified.

Definition

The adopted Council definition of an out of school programme is:

Care and recreation programmes which provide regular, reliable, local care and leisure activities for children aged between 5-14 years, either

- *After school programmes that operate at least **three sessions per week, for two hours or more;** and/or*
- *Holiday programmes that operate at least **three days per week for six hours or more per day on a regular basis.***

Quality out of school programmes meet social, recreational and developmental needs of children.

The programmes provide positive professional supervised care for working parents, which is in increasing demand. They also provide community support for parents enabling them "time out", and greater flexibility for employment, education and training. They provide single parents with appropriate support especially when family networks are not available or present.

RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

Children are a priority target group for the Council. The Council currently has policies which articulate the Council's commitment to improving the quality of life for children and their families.

These policies include: Social Wellbeing and Community Policy, Children's Policy, Recreation and Sport Policy, and the Out of School Programme Policy.

The Out of School Programme Policy states that children of Christchurch have the right to care, recreation and leisure activities in their "out of school time" which are safe, fun and age and culturally appropriate.

COUNCIL'S CURRENT ROLES

Council is currently involved in supporting out of school programmes (before, after and holiday) through **service delivery, funding support, advice and resourcing** in varying degrees across different ward areas. In the 2000/01 financial year an estimated \$631,450 was allocated to out of school programmes (which includes both holiday programmes through the Leisure Unit and after school Programmes through the Community Relations Unit).

The Out of School Programme Policy (1999) identifies the following roles in relation to out of school programmes:

- Facilitating and providing;
- Monitoring;
- Researching (existing and future needs and trends);
- Funding support, advice and resourcing; and
- Advocacy to central government and other appropriate agencies.

The Council clearly has an important role to play in relation to out of school programmes. It is a major funder of both direct programme provision and of support and training workers in this field. The Council already has a major role in developing partnerships with community groups and brokering provision in the community.

The capacity of community and community groups to provide these activities is inevitably affected by the resources and skills within the local community and the resources they can attract.

In the out of school programme sector many groups require some support or contribution towards annual operational costs of programmes in varying degrees. Some programmes require more funding particularly those operating in low socio-economic communities because they are less able to generate the required revenue from parent user fees alone. They are also of lesser interest to other providers (not-for-profit and private). The Council has a role in addressing the barriers to provision and ongoing operation of out of school programmes, particularly in these communities.

One of the major issues that has been highlighted in this work is the current trend related to the increasing number of programmes being established in higher socio-economic areas compared to lower socio-economic areas. (See attached Strategy.)

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE

In contrast to the early childhood education sector and formal compulsory education, central government's current role in out of school programmes remains limited.

Out of school programmes are the responsibility of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Administration is carried out by Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), now part of the Ministry of Social Development, with Child, Youth and Their Families (CCYF) carrying out checks on service standards.

There is no guaranteed government funding for this sector although the government introduced the Out of school programme Fee Subsidy for low income parents.

The government OSCAR subsidy was made available from 1 February 1999. It is administered by WINZ and is paid directly to programmes (as of December 2001; it was previously paid directly to parents/caregivers) as part of the “welfare to work strategy”.

To be eligible the child's family must fit low income requirements, and the main caregiver must be working or be undertaking work related training.

This subsidy is for a maximum of \$1.80 per/hour, which falls short of the actual cost of care, which can be up to \$5.00 per/hour (NAOSCAR).

Many beneficiary families or low income earners **do not** qualify for the subsidy and are unable to pay even low charges for a programme

- Recommendations:**
1. That the draft Out of School Programme Strategy be received for information.
 2. That the Community Board consider area implementation recommendations when allocating and prioritising project funds (2002/05) for local out of school programmes (after school and holiday).
 3. That the Community Board consider a three year funding commitment when allocating project funds for out of school programmes.

- Chairperson's Recommendations:**
1. That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.
 2. That the Board write to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women's Affairs urging an increase in the level of subsidy for after school programmes for low income families.
 3. That the level of subsidy for after school programmes for low income families be raised with the next meeting of local MPs.