

5. STRENGTHENING FAMILIES STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2002-03

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The purpose of this report is to update Community Plans Special Committee on Strengthening Families Plan 2002-03. With the desire to further improve outcomes for children at risk, the Canterbury Strengthening Families Group has developed the following strategic plan.

Strengthening Families is a strategy the Government adopted in 1997 to improve the service provision to high-risk children, young people and their families. It arose nationally from concerns about intergenerational cycles of disadvantage and concerns about gaps in service provision at a local level.

The aim of Strengthening Families is to achieve:

- Better outcomes for children by helping families to meet their care, control and support responsibilities.
- Improvements in the abilities of families to resolve difficulties and problems and maximise the outcomes and opportunities for their children.
- Clearer definitions and better collaboration between health, education and welfare sectors, both locally and nationally.
- Better use of existing resources.

Two main areas of work were established: National co-ordination and local co-ordination.

Local co-ordination is a seamless service providing effective local co-ordination of direct and contracted services to families at risk. It is designed to improve outcomes for individuals and families at risk through collaboration and co-operation and involves an inter-agency case management approach to working with families.

From the outset, the Canterbury Strengthening Families process aimed to support better collaboration with a broad range of sectors; in particular, the health, education, welfare and justice/courts sectors, with local Iwi and Council.

The first Canterbury Strengthening Families Co-ordinator was appointed in a full-time capacity around 1998. Through the co-ordinator, the Canterbury Strengthening Families Management Group established the neutral facilitation process to support Strengthening Families case meetings, and has continued to lead statistics nationally for case management meetings.

In Review

Now that the Strengthening Families case management process is well bedded down in Canterbury, the Canterbury Strengthening Families Management Group is in a position to broaden its focus beyond the inter-agency case management approach.

Any proposed strategic development needs to include consideration of regional statistics and trends, a number of conclusions and recommendations from three recent reviews:

Conclusions from the Canterbury Strengthening Families Evaluation 1999/2000.

Recommendations made by the Te Puni Kokiri National Strengthening Families Audit.

Jill Nuthall paper May 2002 – Advocacy for Families participating in the Strengthening Families Process.

Strategic direction and projects of the participating agencies and national Strengthening Families developments.

Conclusions from the Canterbury Strengthening Families evaluation 1999/2000 identified:

- The ongoing need for processes that engage frontline staff, such as staff training, agency reinforcement and recognition in regard to participation in the Strengthening Families process as participants, lead agencies and as neutral facilitators.
- The need for clarity between the national and regional roles of Strengthening Families.
- The need for caution in the 'product branding' of Strengthening Families, particularly in regard to nationally launched initiatives.

- The need to consider devolving some aspects of decision making away from the full Canterbury Strengthening Families Management Group.
- The need to improve Maori responsiveness and the participation and involvement of Maori.
- The need to further investigate Pacific responsiveness and the participation and involvement of Pacific people.
- The need to develop a strategic approach beyond best practice case management, with an emphasis on joint initiatives with a preventative approach.
- The requirement for monitoring existing/emergent service gaps, with the development of services to fill these gaps.

Recommendations from the Te Puni Kokiri National Audit on Strengthening Families collaborative case management and its value for Maori whanau identified:

- The need to engage with Iwi and Maori social service providers, with the view to improving local level co-ordination.
- Supporting the establishment of strategic relationships with whanau, hapu, Iwi and Maori communities, by promulgating models of engagement that recognise and apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- The need to ensure that Strengthening Families data is collected in accordance with Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity categories.
- The need to institute a more systematic process of collecting data on outcomes of the Strengthening Families process.

A paper from Jill Nuthall, May 2002 – Advocacy for Families participating in the Strengthening Families Process, identified an advocacy function for case management that included:

- Support for an individual family at a Strengthening Families case management meeting
- A database of information on advocacy options available for families.
- Specific training in advocacy.

The Vision

The vision of the Strengthening Families Group is improving life outcomes for children in families at risk.

Canterbury Strengthening Families Management Group's purpose is to progress the regional journey from intersectoral co-operation through intersectoral collaboration to intersectoral integration, with the overarching goal of seamless service provision to children, young people, their families and communities in the Canterbury region.

The four identified key areas are:

- Ongoing development of best practice case management processes.
- Ongoing identification, analysis and prioritised advocacy of regional gaps in service provision for children, young people, their families and communities.
- Development of intersectoral planning processes that support a community wide vision for children, young people and their families.
- Development of intersectoral services for children, young people and their families.

To support the direction, the full Canterbury Strengthening Families Management Group will meet bi-monthly.

Projects currently being undertaken by participating agencies were identified and included under the appropriate key functional areas.

A lead sponsor agency will be appointed to provide a status report on each of the key areas.

Strategic Area One:

Ongoing development of best practice case management processes for children, young people and families

- Ensure ongoing processes engage frontline staff. To include staff training, agency reinforcement and recognition of participation by families, lead agencies and neutral facilitators
- Oversee and manage the implementation of Level 3 systems of care appropriately for the Canterbury region
- Continue the development of Strengthening Families case management processes.

- Monitor and apply caution in the 'product branding' of Strengthening Families, particularly in regard to nationally launched initiatives.
- Engage with Iwi and Maori social service providers, with the view to improving local level co-ordination
- Ensure that data collected is in accordance with Statistics NZ classification of ethnicity categories, and initiate a more systematic approach to the collection of data on outcomes of the Strengthening Families process.
- Develop Pacific responsiveness and the participation and involvement of Pacific people.
- Develop an advocacy process to support individual families throughout the Strengthening Families case management process, including a database of information on advocacy options available for families and specific training in advocacy.

A core group be established comprising of a representative each from Health, Children, Young People and Their Families (CYF), Education and the Ministry of Social Development (as the employing agency) and the Canterbury Strengthening Families Co-ordinator to oversee and report on this area.

Strategic Area Two:

Ongoing identification, analysis and prioritised advocacy of regional gaps in service provision for children, young people, their families and communities.

Current projects include:

- Child Health Plan – Sponsor, Canterbury District Health Board
- Aranui Community Renewal Project – Sponsor, Community Housing
- Healthy Christchurch – Sponsor, Christchurch City Council
- National Tamariki Ora/Well Child – Sponsor, Plunket
- Families on Unemployment Benefit – Sponsor, Work and Income

Strategic Area Three:

Development of intersectoral planning processes that support a community wide vision for children, young people and their families.

Wherever possible, ensure alignment between related planning processes to reduce duplication.

Current projects include:

- Local Services Mapping – Sponsor, CYF
- Collaborative Planning Project – Sponsor, Ministry of Social Development
- Agency strategic planning

Strategic Area Four:

Development of intersectoral services for children, young people and their families.

Services emphasise prevention, include evaluation components and timeframes and support the collaborative case management of Strengthening Families.

- System of Care/Wraparound Model – Sponsor, Child, Adolescent and Mental Health Service
- Programme of Action – Sponsor, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
- Level 2 System of Care (for young people at risk of suspension and exclusion – Sponsor, Ministry of Education
- Youth Day Programme – Sponsor, Department of Corrections
- Children and Youth Services One Stop Shop – Sponsor, Christchurch City Council.

The 2002 Strategic Plan introduces new levels of collaborative partnerships between agencies in Christchurch.

Staff

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Council ensure that an elected member is available to attend Strengthening Families meetings as required.