



Improving Outcomes for Young People in Counties Manukau



AUCKLAND YOUTH SUPPORT NETWORK
PLAN OF ACTION 2006

A NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Improving Outcomes for Young People in Counties Manukau

AUCKLAND YOUTH SUPPORT NETWORK PLAN OF ACTION 2006



Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
The Plan of Action	5
Why emphasise Counties Manukau?.....	6
Building on the gains.....	7
What about other areas of need?.....	8
Planning, implementation and review	8
Monitoring and evaluation	9
What happens next?	9
1. DEVELOPING THE PLAN OF ACTION.....	10
Immediate action to address and de-escalate youth gang activity	10
Research to understand the problem	10
What did the research find?	10
Poverty	11
Parental disengagement	11
Parenting practices and support.....	11
Motivational issues for young people	11
Disengagement by young people from formal education	12
Lack of engagement with support services	12
Risks and protective factors.....	12
Integrated case management	16
Youth workers.....	16
The role of each agency.....	16
The New Zealand Police.....	16
The Ministry of Social Development – Child, Youth and Family	16
The Ministry of Social Development – Family and Community Services	17
The Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income.....	17
The Ministry of Youth Development.....	17
The Ministry of Justice – Crime Prevention Unit.....	18
The Ministry of Education	18
The Ministry of Health.....	18
2. THE PLAN OF ACTION	19
PART ONE	19
Crisis management response to immediate concerns.....	19
Why we’re doing this	19

Action: Set up Police Youth Action Teams to respond to youth gang incidents in Counties Manukau	19
Action: Increase out-of-hours youth worker support to police stations.....	20
Action: Provide facility for short-term supported placement for at-risk young people picked up out-of-hours	20
Action: Provide improved centralised police facilities	20
PART TWO	21
Intervening with young offenders	21
Why we're doing this	21
Action: Strengthen Youth Offending Teams across Auckland, with initial focus on Counties Manukau.....	21
Action: Design and implement integrated case management	22
Action: Enhance capability of Child, Youth and Family youth justice services and the Family Group Conference process	22
Action: Strengthen Police responsiveness to youth through linking with Māori wardens.....	23
Action: Develop a delivery model for Police to respond to Pacific youth, including Pasifika wardens	23
Action: Implement and review the Turn Your Life Around programme in Counties Manukau	24
Action: Review the Genesis programme.....	24
Action: Assess the effectiveness of the Male Youth New Directions programme	25
Action: Implement the New Zealand Police Alcohol Action Plan 2006	25
Action: Evaluate adequacy and coverage of drug and alcohol services for young people in Counties Manukau.....	26
PART THREE	27
Preventing poor outcomes among at-risk children and young people	27
Why we're doing this	27
Action: Extend Family Start services to Papakura and Mangere	27
Action: Evaluate the provision of Social Workers in Schools in Counties Manukau.....	28
Action: Introduce social and health assessments for Year 9 students	28
Action: Improve reporting and management of truancy	28
Action: Expand Youth Transitions Services to Counties Manukau	29
Action: Evaluate provision of family support services in Counties Manukau.....	30
Action: Assess coverage and adequacy of budgeting services	30
Action: Provide Police Education Officers to schools (Years 7–13).....	30
Action: Increase the number of community-based youth workers in Counties Manukau and wider Auckland.....	31
Action: Establish dialogue with young people to identify their priorities for action	32
Action: Identify youth support service gaps across Counties Manukau for future action.....	32
Action: Provide parenting programmes to support parents and caregivers of school-aged children and teenagers	33
Monitoring and evaluation	33

3. HOW DOES THE PLAN LINK WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES?	34
Families – Young and Old, and Economic Transformation priority themes	34
Effective Interventions.....	35
Early years support	35
Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa.....	36
Primary Health Organisations	36
Working for Families.....	36
New Zealand Housing Strategy	37
Pasifika Education Plan 2006–2010	37
Te Kōkiri – The Mental Health and Addiction Action Plan 2006–2015	37
Counties Manukau District Pacific Peoples’ Strategic Plan 2005–2007	38
Crime Reduction Strategy	38
Youth Offending Strategy	38
Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families.....	39

Executive summary

This Plan of Action (the Plan) is a significant commitment by government and non-government sectors to work together to improve outcomes for the young people of Counties Manukau and other key areas across Auckland.

The Plan's genesis lay in reports by community representatives and the New Zealand Police of increasing levels of youth gang activity and violent assaults in Counties Manukau, and the knowledge that existing services in Counties Manukau were too few and too stretched to meet demand.

The Chief Executives of the Ministries of Social Development, Justice, Education and Health and the New Zealand Police are making the implementation of the Plan for Counties Manukau a priority for their agencies. These agencies are also represented on the Auckland Youth Support Network that leads development and implementation of the Plan at the local level. The Plan is also supported by Housing New Zealand Corporation, Counties Manukau District Health Board and a range of non-government organisations and local government bodies in Auckland.

This Plan provides systematic, integrated, intense, targeted commitment to the children, young people, families and communities of Counties Manukau and Otahuhu. Evidence shows that if government works in partnership with non-government agencies, communities, and local government, we will achieve much better results.

The work we have done to develop this Plan has provided important lessons for future work, both in Counties Manukau and across other areas. Already, several of the initiatives in here are well under way and others have been completed.

The Plan of Action

This Plan sets out 26 actions that we are undertaking now to improve outcomes for young people in Counties Manukau and other key areas across Auckland. The Plan builds on actions already initiated and spans various social sector agencies, including Social Development, Justice, Education, Health, the New Zealand Police and Youth Development, all of which aim to better support young people to succeed. The Plan encompasses actions aimed at:

- providing better support to young people picked up by the police outside of normal business hours, ensuring they receive the right assistance sooner and police resources are used appropriately
- intervening more effectively with high-risk recidivist youth offenders (who may or may not be youth gang members) in order to interrupt offending behaviour and re-connect them to their communities, by way of employment, education or training
- supporting at-risk children and young people and their families to make positive choices.

Over the past decade, government has undertaken considerable investment in Counties Manukau. Budget 2006 provided \$10 million over four years for youth workers, wrap-around services for high-risk young people and their families, and parenting information and support – key actions in the Plan. This complements wider government investments to support young people and their families, such as Working for Families, improved access to primary health services and Youth Transitions Services.

Why emphasise Counties Manukau?

The Plan emphasises Counties Manukau as a first step to addressing the underlying factors to social disadvantage and youth gang and youth crime issues. If we get it right in Counties Manukau, we will stand a better chance of getting it right elsewhere.

Counties Manukau is a vibrant community with much to offer, including the talents, skills and prospects of its young people. It has particular characteristics that distinguish it from other regions in Auckland and New Zealand. It is one of the most ethnically diverse, with 165 different ethnic groups, and includes second- and third-generation migrant families. It is one of the fastest growing in population terms with the highest proportion of youth. Twelve percent of New Zealand's young people under the age of 24 live in Counties Manukau (thirty-nine percent of the Counties Manukau population are under 24 years). The high proportion of young New Zealanders living in the region means that it will be a significant influence on the future prosperity of our nation.

Counties Manukau reflects the future face of New Zealand. While New Zealand as a whole prepares for an ageing population, Counties Manukau is still experiencing a growing youth population. This demographic poses both opportunities and challenges for the families and communities of Counties Manukau. Like all families, Counties Manukau families want the best for their young people. There is opportunity here to build on and harness the potential of Counties Manukau young people.

International research and the research we carried out in Counties Manukau show that gang involvement is a symptom of deep, underlying social factors that contribute to a range of negative outcomes for young people. Youth experimentation, challenging behaviour and testing of public expectations are normal adolescent behaviours. For some of the

families of Counties Manukau, however, these challenges arise in a context of:

- youth inactivity and boredom
- economic deprivation
- reduced housing affordability and its associated effects, such as overcrowding
- intergenerational unemployment and involvement with multiple government agencies
- intergenerational gang membership
- caregiver disengagement from their children
- diminishing supports for families who are struggling to guide and control their children
- lack of community support structures for parents and families
- poor health status.

While it contains some wealthy pockets, Counties Manukau is home to some of the poorest parts of New Zealand. The southern wards of Mangere, Manurewa, Otara and parts of Papatoetoe have a level of economic deprivation, poverty, transience, housing overcrowding and unemployment that exceeds many other parts of Auckland and New Zealand. Indicators of health, educational attainment and living standards are poorer, on average, for people in Counties Manukau than for those in many other areas of New Zealand.

As New Zealand's population ages, there will be an increasing demand placed on the youth population to provide both economic and social support. If we don't get things right now, the future social and economic costs to New Zealand will be huge. Ensuring our young people are well-placed to contribute positively in the economic and social life of New Zealand is vital not only to the future of Counties Manukau but to New Zealand.

This is why, over the past decade, government has invested substantially to improve outcomes for people in Counties Manukau. Despite progress, some parts of the population are

clearly continuing to struggle. A small part of the population is also engaging in activities that cause substantial harm to others and also to themselves. Youth offending can, for example, include involvement in tagging, gangs, drugs, theft and acts of violence. We know the government and community-based services that work with families and communities are seriously stretched and that continued and concentrated investment in Counties Manukau is needed.

Building on the gains

Considerable work has been undertaken in Counties Manukau to support the young people there. Government has invested in early childhood interventions, school-based programmes, interventions to assist entry into primary school and employment, primary health organisations, youth health services, and community-based youth and family development programmes. Across areas such as education, health and justice, government has partnered with community and non-government agencies in order to improve the economic and social wellbeing of children and young people and the families and communities that support them.

For example, Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara (SEMO) began in 1997 with the aim of improving school governance, raising the quality of teaching and increasing community participation within the region's 30 primary and intermediate schools. Independently verified results show statistically significant gains in student achievement. This is an important example of recent Pacific educational success. The Pasifika Education Plan, released in June 2006, provides a framework for building on Pacific educational attainment such as SEMO.

These policies and interventions have established a solid base for further work, and each agency is committed to maintaining past gains and building on them. From July 2007, government has committed resources to roll

out Family Start to Papakura and Mangere and to extend Youth Transitions Services to better meet the needs of young people in Counties Manukau. Other initiatives, such as the Roots of Empathy programme which teaches children to consider the needs and feelings of others, are also planned.

The collaborative approach already under way in response to the youth gang activity in Counties Manukau has the potential to assist young people to turn their lives around by addressing the factors that contribute to youth gangs and youth crime. Improving outcomes for young people is, however, difficult and time-consuming work that requires significant, long-term investment and collaboration across a range of groups and government agencies. It needs to include action across all life stages and in all domains of the young person's life, including their family members and the wider community.

What about other areas of need?

Counties Manukau is not unique in the challenges it faces. Other parts of Auckland and New Zealand experience similar stressors. Some of these areas are also struggling with youth gangs and, more generally, with youth offending. Auckland police have identified a “corridor of youth gang hotspots” that extends beyond Counties Manukau through to the western part of Auckland City, encompassing areas like Otahuhu, Mt Roskill and Avondale.

We know that we need to extend additional support to other areas where young people are struggling. For that reason, there are actions in this Plan that target hotspots and, in the future, we will do more for other areas in need. Right now, we’re focusing most of the attention on Counties Manukau and Otahuhu to ensure that the assistance provided has the greatest impact. This work will provide important lessons that can be applied to other areas of need. The Plan is the beginning of an Auckland-wide and, eventually, a national effort to improve youth outcomes and respond to youth gang activity.

Planning, implementation and review

The Plan is a first step to addressing the underlying factors to social disadvantage and youth gang and youth crime issues. As such, it is the beginning of a constant process of planning, implementation and review.

The Plan identifies actions to be implemented by 1 July 2007. New actions will be added as time goes on. For example, crime prevention approaches also emphasise urban design and planning to enhance social inclusion and improve the quality of life of young people and their families. Other areas of importance for future consideration are mental health services for young people, including services to address gambling addiction, and promising youth initiatives, such as residential job skills training for youth at risk. We are also considering the development of a cost–benefit analysis framework of reducing youth offending in Counties Manukau.

A successful Plan will need highly trained and skilled workers to implement the proposed interventions. Given this, strengthened non-government organisations, and enhanced capability for communities to develop their own solutions, are also intended outcomes of the Plan.

Monitoring and evaluation

We also need to understand the effects of the actions being implemented, and feed that information into our future planning. Progress toward improving outcomes for young people in Counties Manukau will be monitored so that we will know if the increased effort in Counties Manukau is making a positive difference in the lives of young people and families.

A monitoring and evaluation plan is currently being developed and will include appropriate indicators to measure change across areas of health, education, youth offending and employment. We would expect to see, for example, reduced reports of youth gang activity and youth offending, increased uptake of services, reduced truancy rates, increased student take-up of tertiary education, training or employment, and a reduced number of 18–24 year olds in receipt of benefits.

What happens next?

Work to improve outcomes for young people in Counties Manukau began prior to the development of the Plan and will continue beyond its lifespan.

This Plan is only one part of a much broader process, and central government is only one part of this picture. Families, communities, local government, churches, non-government organisations and the private sector all have a role to play. We know that the different communities within Counties Manukau have different strengths and are facing different challenges. We need to learn more about individual communities so that, together, we can tailor responses more effectively.

In the longer term, the activities outlined in the Plan will be incorporated into agencies' core business. Ensuring the Plan is delivered is a priority for all of the government agencies involved, and we will continue to work alongside non-government organisations and community groups in its implementation.

1. Developing The Plan of Action

In November 2005, a co-ordinated response to the reported gang activity in Counties Manukau was implemented by the Chief Executives of the Ministries of Social Development, Justice, Education, Youth Development; the New Zealand Police; and the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. The Ministry of Health also recently joined this Chief Executives forum. In Auckland, these agencies are represented on the Auckland Youth Support Network, which leads the response on the ground.

These key agencies agreed to a three-pronged approach to addressing the presenting issues:

- immediate action to address and de-escalate some of the youth gang activity in Counties Manukau
- research to understand the problem
- a medium- to long-term response shaped by the research and our community engagement processes.

Immediate action to address and de-escalate youth gang activity

The immediate response focused on containing youth gang activities while a longer-term solution was developed. The experience of implementing this immediate response has informed the development and implementation of this Plan.

Research to understand the problem

The Ministry of Social Development conducted research into youth gangs in Counties Manukau, focusing particularly on the communities of Otara and Mangere as they were the key hotspots at the time. The project's aim was to provide information that defined "the problem" and the types of responses that may be useful. This evidence base, alongside community engagement processes, was used to inform a cross-sectoral response to youth gang issues.

While the focus of the research was on Otara and Mangere, research participants were drawn from Counties Manukau and Auckland City and included:

- community-based participants – including social service agency staff, service providers, school representatives and community representatives with an interest or involvement in youth and youth gang activities
- Auckland regional staff of central government agencies – including New Zealand Police, Ministry of Education, Child, Youth and Family, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Youth Development, Ministry of Social Development (including Work and Income and Family and Community Services)
- current and former youth gang members
- young people not affiliated with gangs.

What did the research find?

The research confirms that multiple and interrelated adverse social, economic and family conditions underlie the formation of youth gangs and the incidence of youth crime. The research identified a number of factors that contribute to poor outcomes for young people.

Poverty

- Youth gangs and youth crime appear to be related to economic deprivation. This finding is consistent with international research, which indicates that gangs are likely to flourish within economically depressed communities, such as those found in parts of Counties Manukau.
- Stress arising from financial commitments can lead to the use of and/or reliance on private lending institutions. This can result in a cycle of debt, high interest rates and increased pressure within the home, which can contribute to parental and family stress.

Parental disengagement

- Parental disengagement is evident amongst families where parents are employed as well as families where parents or caregivers are not in employment.
- Where youth gang members come from families with working parents, the parents often hold multiple jobs. This results in extreme work–life imbalances where, in an effort to provide financially for their family, parents are unable to engage with their children.

Parenting practices and support

- First- and second-generation Pacific immigrants were often described as having lost the supportive role of the village structure. This, coupled with conflicting ideas over accepted parenting practices in New Zealand, impacted negatively on parenting methods.
- Māori participants identified the loss of wider whānau networks and supportive structures through rural/urban migration and historical disenfranchisement as negatively impacting on parenting practices.

Motivational issues for young people

- Youth gangs provide a proxy family unit that provides support and meets social needs for young people who cannot get this from their own families.
- Some types of youth gangs provide a source of financial and material gain. This needs to be understood in the context of economic and environmental deprivation.
- Youth gang membership can provide a source of status and recognition, as well as a source of protection in or out of school.
- Peer pressure can influence a young person's decision to join a gang. Research participants identified a lack of adult mentors who can intervene to alleviate this pressure.
- A combination of boredom and a lack of activities can create a void in the lives of young people that is filled by forming groups that sometimes engage in criminal activity. Alongside this is the excitement that some young people associate with crime, which reflects a complex mix of boredom, a lack of alternative activities for enjoyment or recreation, and a lack of positive adult mentors. Some youth gang members also suggested that criminal activity can become habitual.
- A desire among some young people for association with an adult gang is a motivational factor. This occurs alongside the active or passive recruitment that some adult gang members engage in.

Disengagement by young people from formal education

- There was a general belief among research participants that disengagement from the formal education system is strongly related to engagement in criminal activity by young people. Evidence from this work suggests a number of young people in these communities are, unlawfully, not participating in school. For some students, school reinforces a sense of failure.

Lack of engagement with support services

- Lack of awareness, lack of confidence in service providers, pride, shame and suspicion can deter parents from engaging in services that could assist families in need of assistance.

Risks and protective factors

Previous national and international research on youth crime prevention has identified the risk factors to youth offending, the key domains in which risk factors arise, and the protective factors that can reduce those risks.

The identified risk factors will be of no surprise to most people. They include poverty, disengagement from school, inadequate housing, unemployment, lack of social and coping skills, the influence of delinquent peers, transience, family violence and substance abuse. Evidence shows that the more risk factors and the greater their severity, the more likely the young person will become an offender.

The protective factors consist of internal and external strengths that help children resist risky and antisocial behaviour. They promote self-esteem, achievement and positive relationships and provide new opportunities.

A summary of risk factors and protective factors is provided in the following table, alongside the interventions government agencies are committing to in order to address the risk factors and strengthen the protective factors to minimise the likelihood of youth offending and poor social outcomes.

INDIVIDUAL		
RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS	INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • birth injury or disability • insecure attachment/child is rejected • poor social skills • low self-esteem • difficult temperament, aggressiveness • hyperactivity/disruptive behaviour, impulsivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good social/coping skills, eg problem-solving skills • adequate early motor and language development • physically and mentally robust • attachment to family • school achievement • easy temperament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intensive home visiting through Family Start • parenting information and programmes • access to social work services for children in primary and intermediate schools
FAMILY		
RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS	INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single parents and teenage mothers • large families in overcrowded housing • poor parental supervision and discipline • socially isolated parents • lack of family rituals and little child–parent contact • parental substance abuse • parents/siblings who engage in criminal activity • family violence, disharmony and neglect • parental absence (through separation, prison, death) • long-term parental unemployment • parents with low educational attainment • families with multiple problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supportive caring parents • family harmony, and secure, stable family • responsibility for chores or required helpfulness • strong family norms and clear behaviour guidelines • supportive relationship with other adults • adequate family income • parents who promote learning • plenty of attention in the first year of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intensive home visiting for vulnerable families through Family Start • wrap-around services for families through integrated case management to address housing, employment, health and other needs • family support services • mentoring for young people and their families through youth workers • parenting programmes

PEERS/YOUTH/SCHOOL CONTEXT		
RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS	INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school failure, poor attachment to school • playing truant or being excluded from school • deviant peer group • bullying, delinquency, violence • peer rejection • inadequate behaviour management • inability to form positive, close relationships • mental health problems, suicidal tendencies • lack of social contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive school climate • pro-social peer group • responsibility and required helpfulness • sense of belonging/bonding • opportunities for some success at school • endearing personality, easy temperament • autonomous, flexible, adaptable • positive outlook/socially adept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to social work and support services through schools, eg Social Workers in Schools • school engagement and truancy management • programmes to support at-risk young people, eg Turn Your Life Around (TYLA) • programmes for young offenders, eg Genesis and Male Youth New Directions (MYND) • social and health assessments for Year 9 students • anti-bullying programmes in schools • mental health and drug and alcohol services for young people • anti-bullying programmes, anti-drugs programmes and self-protection lessons through Police Education Officers in schools
LIFE EVENTS		
RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS	INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • divorce and family break up • frequent family moves • death of a family member • unemployment, or underemployment • early unprotected sex and/or pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting significant person • opportunities at critical turning points or major life transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education, training or employment services for school leavers with minimal or no qualifications • mentor or trusted adults through youth workers and Māori and Pacific wardens • access to support services through youth workers • affordable, long-term housing

COMMUNITY		
RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS	INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concentrations of low income and poor housing • high unemployment, and low educational attainment and low expectations • high population density • neighbourhood violence, crime and illicit drug use • lack of support and recreation services • social or cultural discrimination • media portrayal of violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to support services (eg health services) • participation in church or other community groups • a strong cultural identity and ethnic pride • low unemployment • adequate housing • access to good schools • pleasant neighbourhood • low crime neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urban design and renewal • community crime prevention initiatives • specialised police teams to respond to youth gangs and youth violence incidents • short-term supported placement for at-risk young people • support and recreation services through youth workers • social services for young people and their families, including budgeting and parenting information • dedicated youth offending teams and partnerships between police and community workers • drug and alcohol services for young people

By reducing risk factors and building protective factors, we are emphasising a strengths-based approach. This approach includes a range of services and activities. Some of these are family-focused, participatory (eg holiday activities, after-school activities, community projects, mentoring and volunteering), empowering (eg youth-led programmes), educational interventions (eg homework clubs), and problem-solving (eg life skills courses).

Many of the interventions to address the risk factors and strengthen the protective factors are already happening through, for example, Family Start and Social Workers in Schools. The Ministry of Social Development's research

showed, however, that many of the existing services are stretched to capacity.

Budget 2006 provided \$10 million over four years to provide additional services in Counties Manukau. This funding was allocated for wrap-around services for young people and their families, 22 youth workers to deliver youth activities and improve access to services, and parenting information and support.

Integrated case management

The integrated case management model provides wrap-around services to high-risk young people and families through co-ordinators who facilitate the involvement of relevant government and community services. Integrated case management involves a youth co-ordinator, whose primary focus is the young person, and a family co-ordinator, whose primary focus is the young person's family. They work together and with other agencies to develop a plan for the young person and their family. The Plan identifies the tasks each agency will undertake relevant to the individual case. For example, if the young person's family wants to relocate (to minimise the risk of the young person re-offending), then Housing New Zealand and Work and Income will be engaged to provide support associated with the move. If the young person has not attended school or training, then either the Ministry of Education or a training provider will be engaged to facilitate the young person's education or training.

Youth workers

The immediate response to de-escalate youth gang activity included the funding of youth workers in Otago (a hotspot of gang activity at the time) to work with young people in that community and provide organised youth and community activities.

The Plan proposes the expansion of youth workers to mentor and support more young people across more communities, establish structured youth-focused activities, build a sense of community, and refer young people and their families to needed services. These activities would assist to combat precursors to delinquent behaviour, remove the attraction of gang membership and provide a sense of belonging and solidarity amongst young people. Youth workers are seen as particularly well-placed to work with youth who are currently disengaged from education through the provision of activities outside of school

hours. Youth workers will complement the school-based initiatives and community initiatives already available.

The role of each agency

This is a whole-of-government response to improve outcomes for young people in Counties Manukau and respond to youth offending. At the local level, a range of government agencies have specific roles under this plan. In addition to the Budget 2006 funding, each agency has allocated resources to implement the Plan.

The New Zealand Police

The New Zealand Police has an obvious role of responding to criminal activities when they occur, which often involves taking a child or young person into the police station for further action. The majority of offending is dealt with by Police Youth Aid through the use, for example, of warnings, formal cautions or other community-based approaches. The Police also has a role supporting children or young people in need. Where a child or young person is engaging in harmful activities or is in danger, the Police will work with other agencies, particularly Child, Youth and Family, to decide an appropriate course of action.

The Police also work with schools (by teaching specific crime prevention programmes) and with community representatives to plan and implement appropriate responses to issues of concern to the community. The Police fund specific programmes for youth at risk and implement regional and national strategies to address youth offending.

The Ministry of Social Development – Child, Youth and Family

The focus of Child, Youth and Family is the care and protection of children and young people. Child, Youth and Family works closely with the New Zealand Police, particularly in situations where supported placements for young people are needed and when a child or young person is referred to a Family Group Conference.

Together, they work with children and young offenders to ensure the child or young person is accountable for his or her actions and that the right supports are provided to the young person and their family to prevent reoffending. When a child or young person is sentenced by the Youth Court to a youth justice residence, Child, Youth and Family is responsible for ensuring adequate health, education and rehabilitation services are provided to the young person and that the young person makes a successful transition on leaving the youth justice residence.

Child, Youth and Family also funds some early intervention initiatives, such as Social Workers in Schools, as well as numerous youth offender programmes.

The Ministry of Social Development – Family and Community Services

Family and Community Services (FACS) is responsible for leadership and co-ordination of services and programmes that support families. FACS works closely with community providers and funds the delivery of broad-based social services to improve the wellbeing of families, such as parenting skills through Strategies with Kids – Information for Parents (SKIP) and budgeting skills, as well as activities for young people through community-based youth workers.

FACS also leads and funds a number of cross-sectoral initiatives that aim to ensure the families are receiving the assistance they need from a range of agencies so that their members can live a safe, stable and productive life. For example, Family Start services offer support to vulnerable families from the time a child is born until the child is six. The aim is to ensure positive long-term outcomes for children by working with parents in the home, and linking families with universal and specialised services in their communities. The new integrated case management model developed in response to the youth gang issue in Counties Manukau is led and co-ordinated by FACS. The model provides wrap-around services to at-risk young people and their families to ensure they are

receiving the services required from a range of agencies to address their multiple needs.

As well as funding services, FACS provides information about services available to families through a national directory on its website www.familyservices.govt.nz

The Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income

When young people are ready to leave compulsory education, many will go on to further education or training or into employment. Some, however, do not have the necessary qualifications or experience and therefore have fewer options. Work and Income is a single point of contact for New Zealanders needing to find work, needing income support while unable to find work, or needing support while in work. Work and Income has a number of initiatives, including the Sustainable Employment Strategy and Industry Partnerships, which aim to provide sustainable employment opportunities and address literacy problems which often prevent young people gaining employment. It is also leading the implementation of the Youth Transitions Services in Auckland and will expand these services to Counties Manukau. Youth Transitions Services provides customised support and guidance to young people aged 15–17 to facilitate re-engagement into appropriate work, education and training opportunities.

The Ministry of Youth Development

The Ministry of Youth Development provides leadership, co-ordination and facilitation for youth development through the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa. It provides policy advice on issues affecting young people and promotes youth engagement around the country to ensure that effective youth participation (through the Aotearoa Youth Voices projects) is happening in schools, communities, local councils and government. The Ministry of Youth Development will also support the development of youth workers in terms of their training and development needs.

The Ministry of Justice – Crime Prevention Unit

The Ministry of Justice, through its Crime Prevention Unit, is the primary adviser to government on crime reduction policy and practice. It promotes, supports and funds best-practice community-based crime reduction initiatives and works in partnership with central government, local government and non-government agencies to reduce crime and create safer communities. The Crime Prevention Unit funds a range of programmes aimed at preventing youth crime.

The Ministry of Education

Through schools, the Ministry of Education's primary role is to educate and train young people for productive participation in society. To do this, schools are responsible for ensuring the most appropriate learning environment. This is not always a straightforward task, as many children and young people need assistance to ameliorate factors that inhibit their learning that may or may not be related to their school environment. To this end, the Ministry of Education provides pastoral care as well as initiatives to reduce bullying and other antisocial behaviour. Often, there is a need for schools to provide assessments and referral to social services through health, social and community workers. In addition, the Ministry of Education is responsible for monitoring student attendance at school and reviewing its practices to ensure student engagement in learning.

The Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health through its District Health Boards is responsible for ensuring children, young people and their families receive appropriate and timely health care. This can be through individual contact with primary, secondary or tertiary health providers but it can also occur through other agencies referring individuals to health services. For example, in addition to referrals from schools, children and young people are often referred to health specialists or health services by Child, Youth and Family, Courts or non-government organisations. The Ministry of Health aims to ensure children and young people receive health care through the availability of the full range of health services, including services for their particular needs (such as drug and alcohol services).

2. The Plan of Action

This Plan aims to improve outcomes for young people in Counties Manukau – specifically targeting those at risk of poor outcomes. It spans actions across various social sector agencies, including Social Development, Justice, Education, Health, Housing, Youth Development and Police, all of which aim to better support young people to succeed. The range and variety of risk factors means that any response needs to be multi-faceted rather than simplistic and narrow. The Plan takes a long-term social development approach to the challenges facing Counties Manukau and identifies actions to be undertaken before 1 July 2007. It has a strong crime prevention focus aimed at:

- providing better support to young people picked up by the Police outside of normal business hours, ensuring their safety and the appropriate use of police resources
- intervening more effectively with high-risk recidivist youth offenders (who may or may not be youth gang members) in order to “interrupt” offending behaviour and re-connect them to their communities, by way of employment, education or training
- supporting children and young people, directly and through their families, who are at risk of poor outcomes to make positive choices.

PART ONE

Crisis management response to immediate concerns

These actions target young people who are picked up by the Police at night or the early hours of the morning, who may be in danger or engaging in harmful or criminal activities.

Why we’re doing this

Young people come into contact with the Police for a whole range of reasons. The Police often pick up young people late at night and attempt to return them to their home or another safe place. Sometimes the Police cannot find a place to return them to and will contact Child, Youth and Family for assistance. If the Police and Child, Youth and Family are unable to locate parents or a responsible adult, the young person may end up staying at a police station, which is a highly unsuitable environment for a young person.

Finding appropriate placements for young people can take up a lot of police time and this means that while the Police are doing this, they cannot be out in the community. This part of the Plan aims to provide options for safe and appropriate placements for young people and to alleviate pressure on police resources and time.

Action: Set up Police Youth Action Teams to respond to youth gang incidents in Counties Manukau

Police Youth Action Teams are police officers who provide immediate responses to youth violence and other issues. Youth offenders are referred through Police Youth Aid and the Youth Court, if necessary, or to other agencies to ensure a holistic and whole-of-family solution to youth offenders, while adult offenders are dealt with through the District Court.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 July 2006, the Police had assigned staff and developed their operational framework for Youth Action Teams to respond to youth gang incidents in Counties Manukau.

Action: Increase out-of-hours youth worker support to police stations

Youth workers in police stations will supervise young people, locate family or beds and/or transport young people to family or other available facilities for short-term supported placement. They will work closely with Child, Youth and Family statutory social workers to ensure appropriate responses. This initiative frees up police time so they can have a greater presence in the community and focus on crime prevention.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 October 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Child, Youth and Family), in co-operation with the Police, will have:

- confirmed the level of resourcing required
- specified job content and functions
- actioned employment arrangements.

Action: Provide facility for short-term supported placement for at-risk young people picked up out-of-hours

New facilities will be established to provide short-term or overnight safe placements for these young people until their families are located. The young person and their family will then be followed up and, where appropriate, offered integrated case management. These facilities will be overseen by Child, Youth and Family staff.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 November 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Child, Youth and Family), in co-operation with the Police and Housing, will have:

- confirmed the level of demand
- identified three potential sites.

By 1 June 2007, the Ministry of Social Development (Child, Youth and Family), in co-operation with the Police and Housing, will have:

- implemented practice protocols
- begun operating at least one facility.

Action: Provide improved centralised police facilities

Currently, a lack of after-hours police custody facilities in Counties Manukau means that the Police are required to travel to Papakura to process offenders, resulting in significant non-productive travelling time for the Police. A new centralised police station in Counties Manukau, including cell facilities, is due for completion in December 2006. This will lead to improved efficiency of police resources, allowing more time to be spent on active duties within the community.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 March 2007, the Police will have completed the new police station in Counties Manukau.

PART TWO

Intervening with young offenders

These actions are targeted to high-risk children and young people who come to the attention of the Police, social service agencies or schools through gang-related, criminal or antisocial behaviour. High-risk young offenders could include young people who are already involved in criminal activities or youth gangs, have previous convictions, are detained in care and protection or criminal youth justice facilities, are fulfilling youth court orders, or are currently involved in court or youth justice Family Group Conference (FGC) proceedings.

Why we're doing this

We want to discourage further offending and re-connect high-risk recidivist young offenders to their communities by way of employment, education or training. The effectiveness of interventions is enhanced when they are provided in the young person's social environments, such as schools, families and neighbourhoods.

Action: Strengthen Youth Offending Teams across Auckland, with initial focus on Counties Manukau

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for co-ordinating service delivery at the local level. Five YOTs, consisting of key practitioners from the youth justice agencies, have been established across the greater Auckland area, including Counties Manukau. We need to strengthen the YOTs to improve their effectiveness, ensure greater consistency across Auckland, and enhance their capacity to play a role in reducing youth crime. To achieve this, a co-ordinator will be appointed to work across the five YOTs, to improve transfer of information between agencies and implement inter-agency best practice.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 December 2006, the Ministry of Justice, with other agencies, will have:

- employed a co-ordinator to work with the five Youth Offending Teams across Auckland
- improved the transfer of information both between agencies and across Auckland
- implemented inter-agency best practice, based on lessons from other Youth Offending Teams.

Action: Design and implement integrated case management

Family and Community Services is implementing an integrated case management model for young people and their families. The integrated case management model provides wrap-around services to young people and families through a co-ordinator who facilitates the involvement of relevant government and community services. The aim is to extend the integrated case management model to 100 at-risk young people and their families, over a period of 12 months. This will include four co-ordinators, each with a caseload of approximately 25 young people and their families.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 July 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) had completed the design of the integrated case management model.

By 30 November 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) will have started phased implementation for 50 high-risk young people and their families.

By 1 July 2007, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) will have reviewed and expanded the integrated case management model to a further 50 high-risk young people and their families.

Action: Enhance capability of Child, Youth and Family youth justice services and the Family Group Conference process

The Youth Justice Capability Review focused on developing the resources and systems required by Child, Youth and Family in order to deliver quality youth justice services. Child, Youth and Family will return to having dedicated youth justice social workers, who are skilled and knowledgeable about youth justice processes, to achieve better outcomes for young people within the youth justice system. The recruitment and retention rates of these dedicated youth justice social workers will be monitored. The Ministry of Social Development will invest resources in the training and ongoing development of youth justice staff to ensure that they are provided with appropriate resources and support to undertake the specialist activities and tasks required of them.

Child, Youth and Family will make Counties Manukau a top priority in the implementation of the Youth Justice Capability Review to reduce offending and re-offending.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 July 2007, the Ministry of Social Development (Child, Youth and Family) will have implemented the Youth Justice Capability Review by providing:

- more social workers and Family Group Conference co-ordinators
- resources to assist staff to understand the roles, functions and standards of practice to implement Family Group Conferences
- more resources to implement Family Group Conference plans
- training to improve quality, implementation and completion of Family Group Conference plans, including integrated case management, where appropriate.

Action: Strengthen Police responsiveness to youth through linking with Māori wardens

In Auckland, Māori wardens have good working relationships within both the Auckland City and Counties Manukau Police Districts. Groups exist in Mangere, Otara and Manurewa and work with the respective Police Areas on harm minimisation among Māori communities. Each police district has an internal Māori Responsiveness Plan that includes working with the various Māori warden groups. At this time, a working partnership with wardens exists around reducing alcohol harm. Each police district has in place one or more Māori liaison officers who are working with the Māori wardens on these issues.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 July 2006, the Police had strengthened Police youth responsiveness by linking with Māori wardens.

Action: Develop a delivery model for Police to respond to Pacific youth, including Pasifika wardens

Pasifika wardens are a new concept. They do not exist under statute and can only operate through their sphere of community influence. The development of this concept is still at an early stage. Work continues within the Counties Manukau and Auckland City Districts to form appropriate groups within current resources. Initial work is being undertaken through the Pacific churches.

The roles of the wardens are to be confirmed but it is envisaged that they will have two roles. The first is deployment of wardens in specific locations at specific timeframes to provide guardianship.

The second involves follow-up work with apprehended youth. The Māori wardens model working successfully in the Auckland City area is being used as a model for a Pasifika wardens pilot in Auckland City police district. The Auckland City District Pacific Advisory Group is also being extensively consulted on this. Their presence will support frontline police.

Following wide consultation in Counties Manukau, the Police will continue to use their Pacific liaison staff to engage with Pacific churches and congregations to minimise violence within the community.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 October 2006, the Police, in co-operation with the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs will have clarified the primary focus, role and powers of Pasifika wardens.

By 1 July 2007 the Police in co-operation with the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs will have:

- established protocols and governance arrangements
- commenced a Pasifika wardens' pilot in Auckland City police district.

Action: Implement and review the Turn Your Life Around programme in Counties Manukau

Turn Your Life Around (TYLA) teaches young people to make good choices and to take responsibility for their actions. The programme targets young people who have been involved in petty crime and/or have family members in the criminal justice system. The programme provides extra social support through a social worker who mentors the participants from Year 7 for five years, or until they enter the workforce or further education. TYLA is offered through participating schools in Avondale and Mt Roskill. Following implementation of TYLA in Otara, the programme will be reviewed with a view to expanding into other areas in Counties Manukau and across Auckland.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 July 2006, the Police, in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) and the Ministry of Youth Development, had completed implementation of TYLA in Otara and identified and referred young people to the Otara programme.

By 1 July 2007, the Police, in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) and the Ministry of Youth Development, will have:

- reviewed the effectiveness of TYLA and considered expansion to Mangere, Manurewa, Papakura and wider Auckland
- ensured links with the Youth Action Teams and Youth Offending Teams.

Action: Review the Genesis programme

The Ministry of Justice and the Police fund the Genesis intervention programme for young people arrested for minor offending and for those who are considered medium to serious offenders. Medium to serious offenders could be referred to Genesis by the Courts, by Child, Youth and Family or by Police Youth Aid.

Genesis provides individual case plans and a case worker to work with each young person individually. The Plan encourages the young person to take responsibility for his or her actions, pay reparation and repair any harm they have caused. Genesis also engages the young person's family as part of the process.

Genesis aims to divert young people from further offending. It has been shown that intervening at this point with a structured response and assistance has long-term benefits.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 July 2006, the Ministry of Justice, in co-operation with other agencies, had identified and referred young people to the programme.

By 1 July 2007, the Ministry of Justice, in co-operation with other agencies, will have:

- reviewed the effectiveness of Genesis and considered expansion to other communities in Counties Manukau
- ensured links with Youth Action Teams and Youth Offending Teams.

Action: Assess the effectiveness of the Male Youth New Directions programme

The Male Youth New Directions programme offers a five-month wrap-around programme for 24 young men at a time, who are identified as at risk of entering offending or have developed an offending profile. The programme consists of life skills, mentoring, self-confidence building, physical training, team-building, understanding consequences and personal self-examination. The programme also works with the families of the young men to prevent re-offending. We will review the outcomes of the existing programme and consider ongoing support to continue and extend the programme.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 October 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Child, Youth and Family) will have reviewed the outcomes of the existing programme and, on the basis of this, considered ongoing support to continue and extend the programme.

Action: Implement the New Zealand Police Alcohol Action Plan 2006

The misuse of alcohol has long been connected with offending and victimisation. The New Zealand Police Alcohol Action Plan is a key Police intervention up until 2010 to reduce alcohol-related crime and crashes. Police are implementing four linked objectives across Police Districts to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm. These are:

- minimising alcohol-related crime and crashes; monitoring and enforcement to reduce offending such as compliance with sale of liquor legislation; under-age drinking patrols; intelligence systems and processes; and working in partnership with key stakeholders
- tailoring responses for special events and population groups; controls on alcohol availability, such as Controlled Purchase Operation Guidelines; designated sobering-up areas; and additional trained crowd controllers in place
- developing and supporting the police workforce
- investing in research and evaluation to assist operations.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 July 2006, the Police had implemented the New Zealand Police Alcohol Action Plan and incorporated it into Police “business-as-usual” to:

- address licensing issues
- enforce liquor bans
- address the sale and supply of liquor to under-aged youth.

Action: Evaluate adequacy and coverage of drug and alcohol services for young people in Counties Manukau

The Counties Manukau District Health Board will undertake an evaluation of the adequacy and coverage of drug and alcohol services to improve the development, planning, delivery, capability, quality, efficiency and effectiveness of these services to young people in Counties Manukau. The aim of this evaluation is to ensure the appropriate mix of anti-drug and alcohol interventions, including detoxification facilities, in Counties Manukau.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 December 2006, the Counties Manukau District Health Board, together with the Ministry of Health, will have reviewed the current level of services and identified any gaps. Work will then be undertaken to develop proposals to address those gaps.

PART THREE

Preventing poor outcomes among at-risk children and young people

Young people must be viewed and supported in the context of their broader environment. This includes their family, peers and community and their different social environments, such as school or their place of training or work.

The factors that contribute to youth gang development and youth crime also have an impact on many children and young people who are not affiliated to gangs or involved in crime. This part of the Plan is taking a social development prevention approach to improve outcomes for at-risk children, young people and their families, and to address risk factors and strengthen protective factors that minimise the potential for youth crime or gang involvement.

Why we're doing this

The most cost-effective approach to reducing serious youth crime is to discourage children and young people from joining gangs and engaging in criminal activities in the first place. Most young people can develop and flourish if they are connected to the right mix of social resources and are involved with caring adults. Nurturing relationships are most often developed around the young person's parents and kin but relationships also need to be built and nurtured around community and youth advocates. A range of people and programmes tailored to work with children, young people and their families is available in Counties Manukau. We aim to ensure young people are connected to these services and to expand services to meet a growing population.

Action: Extend Family Start services to Papakura and Mangere

Family Start is a high-intensity, home-based early intervention service available to vulnerable families from six months prior to birth up until the child is five years of age. It aims to improve family functioning and to assist parents to improve their personal circumstances so as to ensure positive long-term outcomes for their children. The programme delivers a parenting programme to families in the home, and links families with universal and specialised services in their communities. International research has demonstrated the effectiveness of such programmes in preventing offending.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 30 June 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services), together with other agencies, had finalised contracts with service providers to extend Family Start services to Papakura and Mangere.

Action: Evaluate the provision of Social Workers in Schools in Counties Manukau

Social Workers in Schools (SWiS) is an inter-sectoral initiative led by Child, Youth and Family. It aims to provide accessible, timely and professional social work services for children in primary and intermediate schools. It is targeted towards meeting the needs of children and families at risk of poor social, educational and health outcomes. Its intention is to intervene before problems exacerbate for a child, young person or their family. Schools have reported that SWiS is a valuable initiative and that it should be expanded in Counties Manukau. Findings from a 2002 evaluation of SWiS show that SWiS has led to improvements in children's educational, health and social experiences. We will be analysing the current level of provision to meet existing needs in Counties Manukau and exploring the possibility of extending access to social support workers in secondary schools.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 December 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Child, Youth and Family) will have:

- analysed the current level of provision of SWiS to meet identified need
- explored the feasibility of extending access to social support workers in secondary schools.

Action: Introduce social and health assessments for Year 9 students

The Ministry of Education is currently running a pilot programme, funded to 30 June 2007, in several Counties Manukau schools called the Healthy Community Schools initiative. This programme is part of the Achievement in Multi-Cultural High Schools (AIMHI) initiative and offers Year 9 students health assessments, follow-up health care and referral to social services through health, social and/or community workers. We recognise the need to support and maintain the gains that have been made by past initiatives. A review of the AIMHI initiative was very positive about the progress made in AIMHI schools over the last few years. We propose to continue with health and social assessments for Year 9 students in decile 1 and 2 schools and we will use the experience of AIMHI to develop the necessary assessment tools for this initiative.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 December 2006, the Ministry of Education with the Counties Manukau District Health Board will have developed assessment tools.

By 1 July 2007, the Ministry of Education with the Counties Manukau DHB will have:

- introduced health and social assessments into decile 1 and 2 schools
- reviewed ongoing funding for the Healthy Community Schools initiative.

Action: Improve reporting and management of truancy

The Ministry of Education has a number of initiatives focused on student engagement. The Ministry is reviewing the operation of its attendance management systems, including the effectiveness of the national truancy service. The Ministry also introduced an electronic enrolment system in intermediate and secondary schools in August 2006, which includes schools in Counties Manukau, to enable easier identification of school-aged students not enrolled in school. The system will be expanded to primary schools in August 2007.

The Student Engagement Initiative (SEI) is a programme designed to assist with defining best practice, identify opportunities to improve policies and procedures, and contribute to a reduction in the rates of truancy, suspensions and early leaving exemptions in SEI target areas and schools. The Ministry is working with individual schools (including some schools in Counties Manukau) to improve the levels of student engagement.

These national initiatives, as well as some localised short-term initiatives in Counties Manukau, include trialling improving systems of assessment and re-engagement of students currently not engaged in schooling.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 September 2006, the Ministry of Education had:

- implemented the electronic enrolment system in secondary schools in Counties Manukau
- built on the Student Engagement Initiative for intermediate and secondary schools in Counties Manukau.

By 1 September 2007, the Ministry of Education will have implemented the electronic enrolment system in all schools in Counties Manukau.

Action: Expand Youth Transitions Services to Counties Manukau

Youth Transitions Services (YTS) supports the large number of 15–17 year olds who leave school with few or no qualifications and who do not immediately transition to employment or training. The core functions of the YTS are to:

- follow up school leavers and engage with young people who are at risk of prolonged disengagement from work
- provide customised support and guidance to facilitate re-engagement into appropriate work, education and training opportunities
- identify and support the development of appropriate labour market, education and training opportunities for young people
- provide a forum for ongoing strategic planning and co-ordination of services.

The Manukau City YTS, launched in March 2006, covers the south-west of Manukau City and caters for 1,250 school leavers. This comprises only 20–25% of the target population. Funding was allocated in Budget 2006 to extend YTS in the Counties Manukau area to address the significant shortfall of services there.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 30 November 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Work and Income) will have assessed the level of service need in Counties Manukau.

By 1 July 2007, the Ministry of Social Development (Work and Income) will be ready to implement expansion of services in Counties Manukau.

Action: Evaluate provision of family support services in Counties Manukau

Family and Community Services has completed local services mapping in Counties Manukau that included community engagement to identify local service needs and service gaps and develop timeframes, roles and responsibilities. There are three phases to this process:

- engaging with stakeholders to develop a community report
- developing a community action plan based on the community report
- implementing and reviewing the action plan.

A draft report for Manukau City has been produced. Family violence and young people were two areas of focus identified in the report as requiring further attention in the planning and implementation phases. Because Counties Manukau has a young population, the report identified a need to ensure that facilities and services are in place for young people. The report also acknowledges that there are a number of other important issues to address, including crime, policing and safety, and education and health services generally.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 30 June 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) had completed mapping local services and identified gaps in programmes and services for Counties Manukau communities. Youth and violence have been identified by the community as priorities for action.

By 1 November 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) will have begun work with the community to develop the action plan to address gaps.

Action: Assess coverage and adequacy of budgeting services

Ministry of Social Development is reviewing budgeting services for the Counties Manukau and wider Auckland region to ensure the services meet the needs of parents and families in Counties Manukau.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 October 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) will have reviewed the funding for budgeting information and advice.

By 1 June 2007, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) will have enhanced budgeting information and advice services in Counties Manukau and wider Auckland.

Action: Provide Police Education Officers to schools (Years 7–13)

Police Education Officers are experienced police officers who are specifically trained to:

- relate positively to children and young people
- use a variety of teaching methods and resources at any level of a school
- support schools in consulting with parents and the community
- work with teachers to plan, implement and evaluate classroom lessons
- establish links between the school and the local police
- make educational programmes available to schools.

Police Education Officers deliver set programmes in schools on topics ranging from dealing with bullying, drugs and self-protection.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 30 June 2007, Police will have:

- considered extending Youth Aid Officers to assigned schools
- expanded Police Education Officers into decile 1 and 2 schools in Counties Manukau
- ensured links between Police Education Officers, Youth Action Teams, Police Youth Aid and Youth Offending Teams
- built stronger links between community constables and schools.

Action: Increase the number of community-based youth workers in Counties Manukau and wider Auckland

Research has shown that prolonged youth inactivity may result in negative outcomes. The majority of participants in the Ministry of Social Development's research acknowledged that one of the biggest gaps in terms of prevention and intervention strategies is a lack of recreational activities that resonate with the needs and interests of children and youth. Boredom was repeatedly held up as a key factor underlying child and youth criminal behaviour and youth gang involvement.

School principals specifically requested either youth workers or family liaison workers (who are not social workers) to provide a mentoring role. Community and regional government participants saw that the role of youth workers would be to deliver activities for young people and refer them and their families to the services they need. These activities would help combat the forerunners to criminal behaviour and the attraction of gang membership, and would provide a sense of belonging and solidarity. Youth workers are seen as particularly well-placed to work with youth who are currently disengaged from education through the provision of activities outside of school hours. Youth workers will complement the school-based initiatives and community initiatives already available.

We will be consulting with communities in Counties Manukau about extending youth workers to those communities and to confirm the role and purpose of youth workers in those communities. We will also ensure there are strong links between youth workers and Youth Action Teams and Youth Offending Teams.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 July 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) had:

- begun consultation with high-need communities to confirm the role and purpose of youth workers
- begun contract negotiations with providers in Otara, Mangere, Manurewa, Papatoetoe and Otahuhu.

By 1 September 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) had finalised the contract for eight youth workers in Otara.

By 1 October 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) will have finalised contracts for six youth workers in Mangere, three youth workers in Manurewa, two youth workers in Papatoetoe and three youth workers in Otahuhu.

Action: Establish dialogue with young people to identify their priorities for action

Through the Ministry of Youth Development, we will be engaging with groups of young people through a series of local gatherings to discuss their needs and priorities in relation to locally provided youth services, including recreational activities. Young people will have opportunities to provide feedback on services and make recommendations about how the design, nature and delivery of these services can be improved. A report on the findings from this process will be provided to the Ministry of Youth Development and other agencies in Counties Manukau, as appropriate.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 30 December 2006, the Ministry of Youth Development will have:

- established youth focus groups with young people in Counties Manukau
- developed proposals for priority services (including recreational activities for young people) to implement in Counties Manukau.

Action: Identify youth support service gaps across Counties Manukau for future action

To improve and expand needed services for children, young people and their families, agencies are identifying gaps in services and assessing the adequacy of service and programme coverage.

A national stocktake of youth programmes that address the needs of youth offenders and youth at high risk of offending is being undertaken to ascertain the level of services available for these target groups. The stocktake will identify the number and types of programmes that receive government funding, their specific target groups, and key information on how the programme is delivered. Comprehensive information on all government and non-government funded programmes in the Counties Manukau youth court area will be collected to identify the area's level of service need.

The Local Services Mapping process for Manukau City (refer to *Action: Evaluate provision of family support services in Counties Manukau*, above) included identification of gaps in services for young people in the areas of education, training and employment, and wellbeing. This information will be used to inform community action planning to ensure appropriate services are developed.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 30 September 2006, the Ministry of Youth Development will have completed a stocktake of youth-focused programmes in Manukau, identified service gaps and reviewed adequacy of service coverage, and incorporated this information into the Local Services Mapping report.

By 30 October 2006, the Ministries of Justice and Social Development will have completed a stocktake of youth justice programmes, identified service gaps and reviewed adequacy of service coverage.

Action: Provide parenting programmes to support parents and caregivers of school-aged children and teenagers

There are a number of parenting programmes and services to support parents and caregivers of pre-school children, eg SKIP. The Ministry of Social Development's research in Otara and Mangere identified an urgent need for parenting programmes and information for families with school-aged children, and teenagers in particular. A gap in services to ease intergenerational family stress was identified in discussions about confusion over accepted parenting practices. A concern was raised that, while parents may seek parenting advice from their church ministers, it cannot be assumed that ministers have an adequate understanding of best parenting practice or the confidence to fulfil this type of role. The Ministry is identifying the programmes that are delivering these services currently and others that may provide them in the future.

Tasks toward achieving the action

By 1 December 2006, the Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services) will design and implement parenting information and programmes for parents and caregivers of school-aged children, and teenagers in particular.

Monitoring and evaluation

We need to understand the effects of the actions being implemented, and feed that information into our future planning. Progress toward improving outcomes for young people in Counties Manukau will be monitored so that we will know if the increased effort in Counties Manukau is making a positive difference in the lives of young people and families.

The Chief Executives of the Ministries of Social Development, Justice, Education and Health, and the New Zealand Police, are meeting regularly to oversee the implementation and the impact of the Plan. These agencies also report to joint ministers on progress toward key milestones.

A monitoring and evaluation plan is currently being developed and will include appropriate indicators to measure change across areas of health, education, youth offending and employment. We would expect to see, for example, reduced reports of youth gang activity and youth offending, increased uptake of services, reduced truancy rates, increased student take-up of tertiary education, training or employment, and reduced number of 18–24 year olds in receipt of benefits.

3. How does the Plan link with other activities?

A consequence of listing actions within a single plan is that it arbitrarily isolates those actions from activities that are already occurring. In reality, the contributory factors identified in the Ministry of Social Development's research, and the broader stressors impacting on Counties Manukau, are already being addressed in many different ways through the actions of central and local government, through the voluntary, non-government and private sectors, and through communities and families themselves. This Plan simply adds to that mix, focusing on critical gaps where central government can have the greatest effect right now.

In this Plan, effort is focused on social interventions with young people and their families, and on working smarter across government agencies, and between government and non-government agencies and the community.

This Plan sits alongside a number of key government strategies and initiatives. Government has invested heavily in comprehensive, cross-sectoral programmes to make work pay for families, to prevent and reduce family violence, and to improve access to affordable, quality services in housing, health and education. Universal and targeted services for families have been strengthened.

Key government strategies and initiatives that are relevant to this Plan include:

- Families – Young and Old, and Economic Transformation priority themes
- Effective Interventions Project
- Early years support
- Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa
- Primary Health Organisations
- Working for Families

- New Zealand Housing Strategy
- Pasifika Education Plan 2006–2010
- Te Kōkiri – The Mental Health and Addiction Action Plan
- Counties Manukau District Pacific Peoples' Strategic Plan
- Crime Reduction Strategy
- Youth Offending Strategy
- Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families.

Families – Young and Old, and Economic Transformation priority themes

The Plan, and future policy or community initiatives developed to support it, will contribute to the government's priority theme of Families – Young and Old by contributing to stronger families, improved outcomes for young people, safer communities, and better health for all. It also supports the theme of working to progress our economic transformation and, in particular, the sub-theme of an internationally competitive city – Auckland.

Effective Interventions

The inter-government agency Effective Interventions Project was established in early 2006 to identify measures for addressing the increasing prison population and reducing criminal offending. The project group reported to Cabinet in June 2006. One of the reports focused particularly on primary, secondary and tertiary interventions that offer promising approaches to preventing and reducing crime.

- Primary prevention through early intervention for vulnerable children and young people (eg intensive home visiting, therapeutic interventions for conduct disorder, and parenting support) can ultimately contribute to crime prevention as well as other positive outcomes.
- Secondary prevention (eg youth justice programmes and integrated case management) focuses on reducing repeat youth offending to lessen the likelihood of young people becoming persistent, life-long offenders. Recent commitments have been made to increase the capability and capacity of both care and protection, and youth justice services, and to enhance the tools and systems available to frontline staff.
- Tertiary prevention (eg intensive surveillance, swift response strategies, and intensive rehabilitation) addresses persistent or prolific offending, and requires co-ordinated, inter-agency action (eg integrated case management).

A reduction in youth offending over time is one of the expected outcomes of the successful implementation of the Plan. This will have a flow-on effect of achieving one of the objectives of the Effective Interventions Project of reduced numbers of prison inmates.

Early years support

Early years support provides the greatest opportunity to enhance the life-course of children at risk of poor health, educational and social outcomes, and can achieve sustainable, long-term reductions in crime.

Early years support aims to ensure all children in New Zealand have the best start in life, flourish in early childhood, and reach their potential. Evidence suggests this can be achieved through building an early intervention system with the following components:

- universal services to help all families and whānau raise their children. All families need access to universal services but those in vulnerable circumstances, who have the most to gain, often need help to ensure access. Universal services must reduce access barriers, particularly for Māori and Pacific peoples, and be responsive to a wide range of circumstances and needs
- targeted services that meet additional needs. Universal services need to be able to refer children, their families and whānau to targeted services. Effective co-ordination and referral mechanisms are also required.

The core infrastructure for early years support is already in place. Government has made significant investments to increase support for children and families/whānau through initiatives such as those improving health care and early childhood education, and through working with families and locally-designed programmes.

Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (2002) promotes the application of a youth development approach as a way of understanding what needs to happen for, around and with young people in New Zealand.

The strategy is about how government and society can support young men and women aged 12–24 years to develop the skills and attitudes they need to take part positively in society, now and in the future. Government has agreed that this strategy provides a policy platform for public sector agencies when developing policy advice and initiatives relating to those aged within the 12–24 years age group. The goals of the strategy are as follows:

- **strengths-based approach**
Goal 1 – Ensuring a consistent strengths-based youth development approach
- **quality relationships**
Goal 2 – Developing skilled people to work with young people
- **youth participation**
Goal 3 – Creating opportunities for young people to actively participate and engage
- **an informed approach**
Goal 4 – Building knowledge on youth development through information and research.

Primary Health Organisations

The government has initiated the Primary Health Care Strategy to ensure more New Zealanders get access to primary health care. The strategy sets out a new way of arranging health care in the community to make sure people get the first level health care they need. Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) are groups of health providers whose job is to look after all the people enrolled with them. PHOs get a set amount of funding from the government to subsidise

a range of health services. Over time, the government is increasing funding to PHOs with the aim of reducing the cost of primary health care for everyone. The first phase of the Primary Healthcare Strategy has been completed. The next steps are set out in the Primary Health Care Strategy Implementation Work Programme 2006–2010. The focus is on reducing health inequalities, engaging communities, and improving the prevention and management of chronic conditions. The vision of the strategy is to improve the health of local populations through a population approach, improving access, and exploring new ways of delivering services.

Working for Families

Working for Families is a government package that was launched in 2004. It is designed to make it easier to work and raise a family by putting more money in the pockets of New Zealand's low- and middle-income families with children, and make work pay for parents who move off a benefit and into work. The aim is to provide more support to ensure that families have enough income for an adequate standard of living, whether they get their income from wages, from a benefit, or from a mix of both.

The package has four components:

- increasing family incomes and making work pay: by increasing Family Support rates and making Family Support available to more families with children
- more affordable housing: by making the accommodation supplement available to more working people
- more help with childcare costs: by significantly increasing the subsidies for pre-school and out-of-school care and making them available to more parents earning higher incomes
- a simpler system: by making it easier for people to know what they are entitled to and how to get it by simplifying the way in which social assistance payments are made through the tax and benefit systems.

New Zealand Housing Strategy

The New Zealand Housing Strategy sets out the government's programme of action for housing over the coming 10 years. Housing New Zealand Corporation will:

- work with industry and local government to bring about sustainable housing supply
- improve housing assistance and affordability
- improve access to home ownership
- develop the private rental sector
- improve housing quality
- strengthen housing sector capability
- meet diverse needs.

Government's vision is for all New Zealanders to have access to affordable, sustainable, good quality housing appropriate to their needs.

Pasifika Education Plan 2006–2010

The Pasifika Education Plan provides strategic direction for co-ordinating all policies that aim to improve education outcomes for Pacific peoples. The plan's success requires Pacific families and communities, education services and government to work together. The first plan was launched in 2001 and organised different goals for the early childhood, compulsory and tertiary education sectors, and goals for education sector-wide.

The Pasifika Education Plan 2006–2010 was launched on 7 June 2006 and builds on the progress made so far to raise participation and achievement. The Pasifika Education Plan 2006–2010 goals are:

- in early childhood education, to focus on increasing participation in quality early childhood education services
- in compulsory education, to focus on increasing achievement in early literacy

and numeracy, and the attainment of school qualifications through improving engagement in schooling

- in tertiary education, to focus on increasing participation, retention and achievement and encouraging progression to higher levels of study
- in education sector-wide, to monitor the implementation of the Pasifika Education Plan, develop models of effective practice contributing to education outcomes and consolidate strategic approaches and networks supporting Pacific education within New Zealand and across the Pacific region.

Te Kōkiri – The Mental Health and Addiction Action Plan 2006–2015

Te Kōkiri – The Mental Health and Addiction Action Plan 2006–2015 sets the steps for implementing Te Tahuu – Improving Mental Health 2005–2015, the Second New Zealand Mental Health and Addiction Plan. Te Kōkiri identifies specific actions, key stakeholders and organisations responsible, outlines milestones, and measures and sets timeframes for achieving actions. The Plan builds on the 10 leading challenges in Te Tahuu, with a focus not only on improving services to those who experience mental illness and addiction, but their families and communities, and on building the mental health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

Counties Manukau District Pacific Peoples' Strategic Plan 2005–2007

The Counties Manukau District Pacific Peoples' Strategic Plan provides the strategic direction for addressing Pacific crime within the Counties Manukau region. The Plan identifies key focus areas that provide a foundation on which future work can be built.

This plan identifies family violence and youth offending as being two major areas of concern in the Pacific peoples' community. Both family violence and youth offending are key intervention areas in the Police's drive to reduce crime and enhance community safety. They are also areas in which Pacific peoples are over-represented. The plan also promotes effective engagement between the Police and Pacific communities and seeks an integrated inter-agency approach to crime reduction and community safety.

Crime Reduction Strategy

In May 2001, the government launched the Crime Reduction Strategy (CRS). The CRS is a cross-government strategy that sets out seven priorities for preventing and reducing crime. The Crime Prevention Unit is currently leading projects under the CRS to:

- reduce community violence and sexual violence
- reduce theft of cars and theft from cars
- reduce organised criminal activity.

The Crime Prevention Unit works with local government to implement priorities for preventing and reducing crime.

Youth Offending Strategy

The Youth Offending Strategy aims to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending by children and young people. It guides government about where to focus its effort in youth justice policy, and helps co-ordinate the local delivery of youth justice services. An action plan directs the implementation of the strategy, and progress reports are regularly provided to Ministers. Key delivery mechanisms of the strategy are:

- local Youth Offending Teams, comprising key practitioners from Child, Youth and Family, the Police, the health and education sectors and, in many areas, local government, iwi, and non-government and community representatives
- a Minister's group and a senior officials group (Youth Justice Leadership Group) to oversee the performance of the local teams and provide co-ordinated and coherent national approach to the development of youth justice services
- an Independent Youth Advisory Group comprising key youth justice experts, including the Principal Youth Court Judge and government and community representatives.

There are five Youth Offending Teams across Auckland, with responsibility for co-ordinating service delivery at the local level.

Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families

The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families (comprising senior officials from across the government and non-government sectors) was established in June 2005 to advise the Family Violence Ministerial Team on how to make improvements to the way family violence is addressed and to eliminate family violence in New Zealand. The Taskforce reported to Ministers in July 2006. The Taskforce's programme of action builds on the initiatives put in place under *Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy* and focuses on:

- leadership: leadership is needed at all levels if New Zealand society is to be transformed into one that does not tolerate family violence
- changing attitudes and behaviour: New Zealand society's tolerance of violence needs to be reduced and people's damaging behaviour within families changed
- safety and accountability: swift and unambiguous action by safe family members and the justice sector increases the chances of people being safe and of holding perpetrators to account
- effective support services: individuals and families affected by family violence need help and support so they can recover and thrive.

Over the next four years, government will implement a national and local community prevention programme to reduce family violence. The programme will build on existing work, and will be led by the Taskforce. Government is also working to strengthen and expand family violence prevention and support services. Services that will get extra funding include 24-hour crisis lines, counselling, social work support, safe-house accommodation, advocacy and information. The aim is to ease pressure on providers and improve access to their services.

Auckland Youth Support Network

Ministry of Social Development
65 Main Highway Ellerslie
Private Bag 68 911
Newton
Auckland

Ministry of Justice
Crime Prevention Unit,
Charles Fergusson Building
38 Bowen Street
PO Box 180
Wellington

Ministry of Education
39-45 College Hill
Private Bag 47 911
Ponsonby
Auckland

The New Zealand Police
Counties Manukau District
Headquarters
482 Great South Road
PO Box 22 142
Otahuhu
Auckland

Ministry of Youth Development
65 Main Highway Ellerslie
Private Bag 68 911
Newton
Auckland

Counties Manukau
District Health Board
19 Lambie Drive
Private Bag 94 052
South Auckland Mail Centre

Improving Outcomes for Young People
in Counties Manukau
Auckland Youth Support Network
Plan of Action 2006

was published September 2006
by the Ministry of Social Development

Electronic copies are available at
www.msd.govt.nz

ISBN 0-478-29336-4