



Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy – Submission Template

This document is intended for individuals or groups who wish to make a formal submission on the child and youth wellbeing strategy.

Please complete this template and email it to: childandyouthwellbeing@dpmc.govt.nz

A guide to making a submission is available on the DPMC website <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/child-and-youth-wellbeing-strategy>

Submissions will close on **Wednesday 5 December**.

Please provide details for a contact person in case we have some follow up questions.

Contact Name:	Jayne McKendry
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Organisation Name:	Citizens Advice Bureaux New Zealand Ngā Pou Whakawhirinaki o Aotearoa
Organisation description: (tell us about your organisation – i.e. who do you represent? How many members do you have? Are you a local or national organisation?)	<p>The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provides free, confidential, independent information and advice to anyone who needs it. We help people know what their rights are and to access services they need. Our service is provided by over 2,500 trained volunteers in 83 community locations throughout the country. During 2017/2018, people sought the CAB's help over 508,000 times, by walking in to their local CAB, phoning (either directly or by using our 0800 number free from either landline or mobile phone), or by emailing. Nearly 200,000 of these enquiries required an in-depth interview to meet the client's needs.</p> <p>The purpose of the CAB is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that individuals do not suffer through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available; or through an inability to express their needs effectively. • Exert a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally. <p>Each CAB is independently incorporated, coming together collectively as Citizens Advice Bureau New Zealand, working with a nationally consistent constitution and purpose. Whenever a CAB volunteer interviews a client they record what the enquiry was about, the options we provided and how we helped that person, couple or whānau meet their specific needs. They also record demographic data. We now have over 4 million such records, providing a rich source of information about our clients' experiences, showing when policies and laws, or the implementation of these, are having a negative impact on people.</p> <p>We use our experience with clients to seek socially just policies and services in Aotearoa New Zealand.</p>

The age range of our clients is fairly evenly spread between 20 years and 69 years, with a minority of clients aged under 20 and over 70. Although we do not routinely record whether or not our client has, or is responsible for, children or young people, we know from analysis of our enquiries that many are.

The following are examples of enquiries we responded to during 2017/2018 from parents and caregivers:

Client has a young person in her care. The young person is self-harming and has previously attempted suicide and needs constant supervision. The client feels she wasn't adequately advised about this and needs support. Client went to the local mental health centre but felt that they just fobbed her off. She wants to complain about this.

Client is new to the area. She has three children under four including a baby and is struggling financially. She says that Work and Income have helped her as much as they can and she wants to know of other options available to her to help with food for the family. She is also having trouble paying her rent and is worried that she and her children will be homeless if she can't find a way to get more money.

Client sought our help to complete the Work and Income Agent form so that he would be reinstated as his son's agent. His son is autistic and incapable of looking after himself. However, the client also has some serious health issues and is feeling unsure about the future.

Note that identifying details have been removed from the client examples above but the essence of the clients' circumstances and experiences remains.

Executive Summary:

(Please provide a short summary of the key points of your Submission - 200 words)

Citizens Advice Bureau New Zealand (CAB) welcomes the development of a Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, and supports the seven principles which underpin it. We endorse the provision included in the Child Poverty Reduction Bill that the Strategy be regularly reviewed.

The vision, that New Zealand is the best place in the world for children, will not be achieved by government action alone. It is essential that collaborative approaches are supported to bring practical effect to the vision and outcomes of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

It is critical that the final Strategy identifies how each of the focus areas will be operationalised and supported fiscally to ensure there is real change in both policy and practice.

Principle 2 states “The wellbeing of children and young people is interwoven with the wellbeing of the family and whānau”. With this principle in mind, we consider it is important that both the review of existing legislation, policies and practices and development of future ones that impact on the wellbeing of parents and whānau are interrogated from the perspective of children’s rights and wellbeing, in order for the proposed strategy to be effective long term.

We recommend adding civics education to focus area 9 and reframing part of focus area 13 to reflect understanding of the rights and responsibilities of self and others.

Submission Content

CAB welcomes the development of a Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. We support the seven principles which underpin it and endorse the inclusion of this Strategy in the Child Poverty Reduction Bill, including provision that the Strategy be regularly reviewed.

Sixteen potential focus areas have been identified for the first Child Wellbeing Strategy. Many of these are consistent with the outcomes CABNZ has advocated for through its submissions to government consultation processes eg, that “housing is warm and dry...and supports good health”, or that “there is stability of tenure...in rented accommodation” (refer to our [submission on the healthy homes standards](#) and our [submission on the reform of the Residential Tenancies Act](#) for more detail including examples of our clients’ experiences), or that “children and young people with emerging mental health needs are identified and they and their families and whānau receive quality, culturally appropriate support” (refer to our [submission](#) to the Inquiry into Mental health and Addiction services).

Principle 2 of the proposed outcomes framework states “The wellbeing of children and young people is interwoven with the wellbeing of the family and whānau”. With this principle in mind, we note that there are a number of other government initiated enquiries and consultations currently underway or near completion, the insights from which we assert should also contribute to the development of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

Some examples include the:

- Legislative and policy work underway to reform rental housing eg, review of the Residential Tenancies Act, and development of standards for healthy homes.
- Welfare Expert Advisory Group, Tax Working Group and review of the minimum wage and policy decisions related to reaching the target of a minimum wage of \$20 per hour by 2020 – adequate income is critical to reducing poverty and ensuring wellbeing.
- Report from the Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction Services.
- Indicators Aotearoa project led by Statistics NZ.
- Digital Economy and Digital Inclusion Ministerial Advisory Group.

It’s also important that both the review of existing legislation, policies and practices and development of future ones that impact on the wellbeing of parents and whānau are interrogated from the perspective of children’s rights and wellbeing, in order for the proposed strategy to be effective long term.

A good strategy is one which achieves change. It is critical that the final Strategy identifies how each of the focus areas will be operationalised and supported fiscally, to ensure there is real change in both policy and practice.

It is also essential that collaborative approaches are supported. The vision, that New Zealand is the best place in the world for children, will not be achieved by government action alone. Collaboration between government, community organisations and people who are directly caring for, supporting and providing services to children and young people every day will be essential for bringing practical effect to the vision and outcomes of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

Focus area 9 – Children and young people have improved opportunities for civic engagement and environmental awareness

In order for children and young people to have improved opportunities for civic engagement they need to know what the rights and duties of citizens are, how citizens interact with and shape their communities and societies, and how government works. This needs to include Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Volunteerism is an important principle for the CAB as it is for our nation, demonstrated by the multitude of societies and clubs that support social, cultural and environmental engagement and provide a wide range of services. Volunteering provides valuable civic engagement for young people.

We recommend that focus area 9 include civics and citizenship education.

Focus area 13 – Children and young people are supported to make positive decisions

The first principle that underpins the proposed approach to child wellbeing is: “The inherent dignity and value of children and young people.” With this principle in mind, we consider that the second bullet point for this focus area needs to be reframed to be about children and young people understanding their rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others.

Please note that your submission will become official information. This means that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may be required to release all or part of the information contained in your submission in response to a request under the Official Information Act 1982.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may withhold all or parts of your submission if it is necessary to protect your privacy or if it has been supplied subject to an obligation of confidence.

Please tell us if you don't want all or specific parts of your submission released, and the reasons why. Your views will be taken into account in deciding whether to withhold or release any information requested under the Official Information Act and in deciding if, and how, to refer to your submission in any possible subsequent paper prepared by the Department.