



SSPA Alert

SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AOTEAROA. OCTOBER 2016

What's happening

The Minister of Social Development, Hon Anne Tolley, has released three Cabinet papers on the planned legislative changes to the CYFP Act. You can read them [here](#). (Scroll down to section headed Legislative Reform . . .).

The first set of changes are in the Bill currently going through Parliament. A second Bill, due next month, will establish the operating model for the new Ministry of Vulnerable Children Oranga Tamariki and its core services: prevention, intensive intervention, care support, youth justice services, and transition support for young people.

You can read Anne Tolley's speech to SSPA Conference [here](#).

The issues

The second set of changes outlined in the Cabinet papers are far-reaching and complex. Some aspects will be welcomed by most; others are more contentious, especially around care and placement.

The main changes being proposed

- Objects of the CYFP Act.** These have been heavily revised and will be described as 'purposes'. New principles emphasise the need for child's to participate in decisions relating to them. They also include a stronger focus on wellbeing as a primary consideration in youth justice matters.
- Care placements.** The underpinning principles are that care placements are made "at the earliest opportunity" into "safe, stable and loving homes", with a focus on "stability and continuity".

The Cabinet papers refer to the need to ensure a child who is in care can strengthen their relationships with family, whānau, hapū and iwi. The papers also state the intention to support families where a child is at risk of removal. Notwithstanding these statements, concerns have been raised that children, and in particular Māori children, will be placed in care outside their kin networks and with undue haste. This aspect of the proposals will need to be subject to close scrutiny when the Bill is published.

Other issues:

- National Care Standards.** These will be defined and contained in regulations.
- Greater flexibility.** The Ministry will have powers to respond more flexibly to reports of concern.
- Family Group Conferences.** Their use is to be widened.
- Children with disabilities.** Stronger support is proposed.

- Caregivers.** The financial support system for caregivers is revised.
- Age settings.** The right to remain in or return to care will be raised to 21, with some support up to age 25.

There may be other issues still under consideration.

What do you think?

We have flagged a number of issues and would like to hear your views on these and any others you think are important.

Your thoughts will be important in developing the SSPA response to government and the parliamentary select committee on these critically important issues around the care and protection of children and young people.

Please note that your feedback will be treated in confidence – your name and organisation will not be referred to unless you request otherwise.

Contribute to the SSPA submission

Please let SSPA know if you would like to be part of a group to discuss and give feedback on our submission to parliament.

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