

PRESERVATION

Towards a Code of Social & Family Responsibility

He Kaupapa Kawenga Whānau, Kawenga Hapori

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Discussion



Document

"Young people are crying out for relationships with caring adults, they want to be involved, they want dialogue, they want to interact, they want to explore decision-making, they want to make mistakes and make corrections."

Laurie O'Reilly, Commissioner for Children (1994 - 1998).

"Families are the thread that holds the human race together. Through our families we are connected to the past - the distant times and places of our ancestors - and to the future - the hope of our children's children."

James Garbarino, Professor of Human Development, Cornell University.

"It takes an entire village to raise a child."

Traditional proverb.

To all New Zealanders, we need your help...

Whilst New Zealand has a strong economy and is competitive internationally, social problems continue to be of concern. We know New Zealanders are worried about social issues.

But we also know that the taxpayer has been spending more and more on government programmes for social services. In 1980 we spent \$4.5 billion. In 1990 we spent \$18 billion. Today we spend \$25 billion.

We need New Zealanders and their families to help decide what responsibilities are theirs and what responsibilities the taxpayer should pick up by funding programmes which will make a difference.

We must talk with each other, not past each other. The issues concern personal responsibility, parental responsibility, caring and making time for children, upholding the law and managing money.

Reading this booklet and filling out the response form gives you a chance to help provide answers.


The booklet is our first attempt at a possible 'Code of Social and Family Responsibility'.

- It defines key issues of concern
- It gives you information
- It tells you what the Government currently does to help
- It challenges you with what expectations are reasonable and why they are important
- It restates the current law which previous Parliaments have passed
- It asks you for your opinion on where we as a country can go from here.

Creating the secure and confident community we all dream of depends on us all. The Government, on behalf of the taxpayer, can't do it on its own. We need your involvement to work with other New Zealanders as we look for the answers.



Jenny Shipley
Prime Minister



Winston Peters
Deputy Prime Minister



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PRESERVATION

Contents:



Introduction 3 - 4

Having your say 5

Issues:

① Looking after our children 6 - 7

② Pregnancy care 8 - 9

③ Keeping children healthy 10 - 11

④ Learning for the under-5s 12 - 13

⑤ Getting children to school ready to learn 14 - 15

⑥ Young offenders 16 - 17

⑦ Sharing parenthood 18 - 19

⑧ Training and learning for employment 20 - 21

⑨ Work obligations and income support 22 - 23

⑩ Managing money 24 - 25

⑪ Keeping ourselves healthy 26 - 27

Status of the Code 28

Introduction:



Social and Family Responsibility

Welcome to this discussion booklet which invites you to participate in the development of a Code of Social and Family Responsibility for New Zealand. You can answer as many or as few of the questions as you like. We look forward to receiving your views on the enclosed response form.

An overview

This discussion booklet sets out the facts on a number of very important social and family issues facing us all today. It also spells out what might become an agreed set of expectations for individuals, families and communities. *Your views are being sought to help shape the final form the Code might take.* Once the expectations have been finalised they may become government policy and/or be spelt out in laws.

I urge you to take this opportunity to have your say on this important social issue. On page 5 of the booklet we explain how you can have your say.

What is a Code and why is one needed?

A Code of Social and Family Responsibility is a way of making people's responsibilities clearer. For example, it sets out what society expects of people bringing up children or those receiving income support.

The proposed Code's purpose would be to:

- Make clear how we all expect people to meet their responsibilities
- Influence behaviour
- Set guidelines for government policy development
- Provide a starting point for further discussion.

Dealing with issues which are a worry

There are a number of issues which concern many people today.

They include:

- The abuse and neglect of children
- Unemployment
- Long-term reliance on benefits
- Violent crime
- Unhealthy lifestyles.

Simple answers?

Some people see the answers to these problems as simple - more laws and more government spending. But laws alone won't turn bad parents into good parents, government departments can't replace families and government officials can't make a community strong.

What are our responsibilities?

As individuals we all have responsibilities. Some of these are spelt out in law. The law more often says, though, what shouldn't be done rather than what should be done.

Some of our responsibilities include:

- Parents and family members
As individuals and members of families we are responsible for ensuring our children and other family members are cared for and supported.
- Adults
As adults we are responsible for looking after ourselves - for earning a living, saving for our old age, getting ourselves educated and trained, obeying the law and keeping healthy.

- The community

We have a responsibility to participate in and contribute to our communities - neighbourhoods, towns, cities, hapu, iwi.

- Society

Our responsibilities as members of society include voting in national and local elections, doing jury duty if called, reporting crimes to the Police and generally acting in a responsible and law-abiding way.

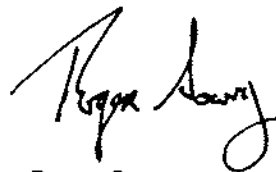
Of course these responsibilities are not always easy to meet - for instance, it's hard work being a parent. And we often have to juggle a number of roles and responsibilities. Sometimes we may need the help of family, friends or support services. What is important is that we are all aware of our responsibilities and know what we should do to meet them.

What would the Code look like?

It could be a published statement of government policy. It could be a law setting out guidelines for policy and new legislation. Or parts of it, particularly the responsibilities which might be compulsory, could be put into a number of laws. This will be decided by the Government once we have heard your views.

How would it relate to other policies and laws?

It would recognise other responsibilities and obligations, such as those arising from international conventions.



Roger Sowry
Minister of Social Welfare

Having your say:

We have sent this booklet to all households in New Zealand to encourage discussion. It sets out important social and family responsibilities in the form of "expectations". These issues concern everybody and we want to hear the views of as many people as possible.

You may find it easiest to fill in the response form as you go through the booklet. You can answer as many or as few questions as you like.

How to use this booklet

The Government has identified 11 issues as being important to cover in the proposed Code. They are:

- 1 Looking after our children
- 2 Pregnancy care
- 3 Keeping children healthy
- 4 Learning for the under-5s
- 5 Getting children to school ready to learn
- 6 Young offenders
- 7 Sharing parenthood
- 8 Training and learning for employment
- 9 Work obligations and income support
- 10 Managing money
- 11 Keeping ourselves healthy

As you read through the issues ask yourself:

- Is this important?
- Do I support this "expectation"?
- What is the role of the Government in encouraging or enforcing this behaviour?
- What further questions does this issue raise? (Some questions for discussion are included)
- Are there other important expectations that you would like to see included?

You may find it helpful to discuss these issues:

- With your family and friends
- In a community group, eg churches, service clubs and school boards of trustees.

Fact sheets, translated booklets and additional copies

A facts sheet pack with further information on the issues is available for people leading discussion groups and those who want more information.

Booklets in Maori, Cook Islands Maori, Samoan, Tongan and Chinese will also be available. You can get a copy of the facts sheet pack, a translated booklet or further copies by calling **Freephone 0800 400 100** (weekdays 7am - 6pm) or by writing to the Freepost address below.

Tapes and Internet

Audio tape copies of the booklet are also available by calling **Freephone 0800 400 100** (weekdays 7am - 6pm). It also appears on the Internet at www.govt.nz/dsw

Written responses

Please make an individual or group response on the mail response form enclosed with this booklet. If you have further comments, you may wish to attach another page to the response form. If you do, please make sure there is a clear reference to the questions being answered.

The final deadline for sending in your response is Friday 24 April 1998.

Send your response to:

FREEPOST 91673, CODE DISCUSSION, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE,
PRIVATE BAG 21, WELLINGTON.

You don't need to put a stamp on the envelope, but please make sure you address it correctly if using an envelope other than the one provided.

What will happen to the responses?

The responses will be looked at by a team of analysts who will report the findings to the Government. The Government will use the information to help develop the Code.

Issue: Looking after our children



Facts:

- There are nearly half a million families with dependent children in New Zealand. Most of these families love and protect their children.
- Some parents have trouble caring for their children, but cope with the help of other family members, friends and/or social services. About one in 20 families are seriously at risk of their children not doing as well as they could.
- A small number of parents don't look after their children properly. 18,500 cases of suspected abuse or neglect were investigated in 1996/97.
- In 1995, 190 children aged 0 - 14 were hospitalised owing to injuries inflicted by other people.
- Injuries from car crashes, falls and poisonings are a major cause of child death and hospitalisation.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

The Government:

- Provides income support for low income families, including \$777 million on Family Support, and funds free health care for children aged under six
- Funds agencies who help families (eg by running parenting programmes)
- Employs social workers who help families with severe family problems
- Provides information on TV, radio and in the newspapers about child abuse, road safety and other childcare issues
- Enforces laws which protect children.

Expectation:



Parents should love, care for, support and protect their children.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The way children are treated by their families when they are young has a huge influence on their future. Where children are valued and nurtured, they have a much better chance of thriving.

CURRENT LAW

Parents must do all they can to prevent their children suffering harm, ill-treatment, abuse or neglect. The Government can step in if it needs to protect the children (*The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989*).

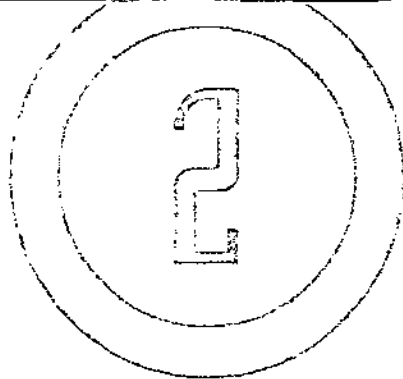
Parents must give their children food, clothing and a roof over their heads. They must not have sex with their children or allow them to be exploited or hurt (*The Crimes Act 1961*).

Parents or guardians must not leave a child under the age of 14 without reasonable supervision and care. Offenders can be fined up to \$1,000 (*The Summary Offences Act 1981*).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What further steps can we all take to encourage good parenting and help solve the problem of child abuse and neglect?
- What can be done to send the message that everybody shares responsibility for helping to protect children?

Issue: Pregnancy care



Facts:

- New Zealand's teenage birth rate is high compared with similar countries. Teenage pregnancies are linked with poor health in babies and cot death.
- Early pregnancy care has real benefits for mothers and babies. When pregnancy care starts after the sixth month of pregnancy, there is a higher risk of low birth weight babies and infant death (including cot death).
- Women who start pregnancy care late in their pregnancy tend to be young and single. They are also more likely to have left school early, or be on a low income, or be Maori or Pacific Islands women.
- A quarter of all pregnant women and half of Maori women smoke during pregnancy. Smoking is linked with premature birth, low birth weight, cot death, asthma, pneumonia and glue ear.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- The Government provides free pregnancy and childbirth services to make sure the mother and baby are healthy. It also provides free public health promotion and education.
- Doctors, midwives and nurses encourage pregnant women to eat well and stop smoking.
- Single women on low incomes may qualify for a pregnancy-related sickness benefit from the 28th week of pregnancy. About 6,000 women received this benefit in the past year.

Expectation:



Pregnant women will protect their own and their baby's health with the support of their partner. They will begin regular visits to a doctor or midwife *early* in pregnancy.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Good care throughout pregnancy helps give children the best possible start in life. Without this proper care there is a greater chance of babies having problems before, during and after birth. Such problems can affect a child's health right through their life.

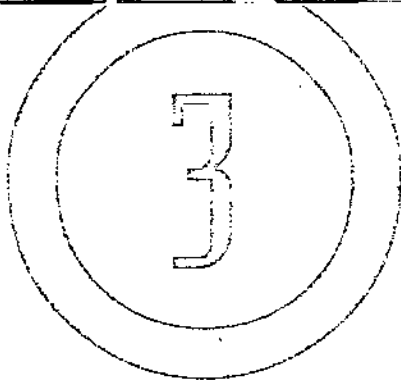
CURRENT LAW

~~There is no law that says women must have pregnancy care—but it is strongly recommended. Pregnancy-related sickness benefit is payable only to people 18 years and over. However, 16 and 17 year olds may receive emergency assistance, subject to a parental income test.~~

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What can we all do to encourage pregnant women to seek early pregnancy care?
- Should the Government use the contact it has with women receiving pregnancy-related sickness benefit to encourage good care during pregnancy, eg to check that they have sought proper care?

Issue: Keeping children healthy



Facts:

- The World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health recommend children be immunised. The risks of the diseases are far greater than the risks of the vaccinations.
- Although most parents support immunisation, only about two-thirds make sure their children have all their immunisations by the age of two.
- New Zealand still has a high cot death rate - 1.5 deaths for every 1,000 non-Maori live births and 6.7 deaths for every 1,000 Maori live births (1992 - 1994 figures).
- More than half of recent cot deaths have been linked to parental smoking. Smoking around children increases the childhood risk of respiratory illnesses by 50 - 60%, and is also a cause of glue ear. Breast-feeding reduces these risks.
- Hearing loss at school entry, mostly owing to glue ear, affects 13% of Maori children, 16% of Pacific Islands children and 7% of other children.
- Poor housing is linked with poor child health (eg respiratory infections).

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- Doctors' visits and medicines are free for all children under six.
- Plunket, Tipu Ora, doctors and public health nurses provide free Well Child health checks and family support. Childhood immunisations are also free.
- The Government provides free public health education, eg pamphlets on breast-feeding, nutrition and common childhood illnesses.
- The Government provides housing assistance to families through Housing New Zealand, the accommodation supplement (just under 300,000 benefits as at 30 June 1997 at a cost of \$662 million for that year), and emergency accommodation (eg Women's Refuge).

Expectation:



Parents will do all they can to keep their children healthy. They will make use of free health checks and immunisations, and seek early advice and treatment for sick or injured children.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Health checks and immunisations are easy and cheap. They give children a healthy start in life and help them remain healthy.

If children are sick or injured, early treatment may save their lives or prevent long-term disability.

CURRENT LAW

Parents must choose whether or not to have their children immunised. Early childhood centres and primary schools must ask parents to give them a copy of the immunisation certificate for children born after January 1995 (Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1995).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What more can we all do to make sure *all* young children receive immunisations and child health checks? eg Should Income Support encourage parents on benefits to take their children for immunisations and child health checks?
- If parents have made an informed choice to have their children immunised, should up-to-date immunisations be required for entry to early childhood education services and schools?

Issue: Learning for the under-5s



Facts:

- Learning begins at birth. The early years of life are crucial to a child's development. Children need a safe, caring home to learn and grow.
- If parents are involved in their children's learning, their children learn and perform better when they go to school. Children learn through play and day-to-day activities like games, talking and singing. They learn at home and in playcentres, kindergartens, Te Kohanga Reo and other services.
- 96% of four-year-olds and 86% of three-year-olds go to an early childhood education service. However, some of the children who don't go, or who start late, are those who have the greatest need.
- The number of Maori children using early childhood services has grown since the 1980s largely thanks to Te Kohanga Reo. The number of Pacific Islands children in early childhood services has also grown, but their participation in licensed services is still lower than for other children.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- The Government helps fund a wide range of early childhood education services, including childcare centres, Te Kohanga Reo, playcentres, kindergartens, home-based care, Pacific Islands centres and playgroups.
- The Early Childhood Development Unit gives parents information and advice on early childhood learning and services and how to set up a playgroup or service. It has 15 offices around the country.
- New services are being introduced to provide support and education to parents with younger children (eg Parents as First Teachers, which is working with almost 9,000 families).

Expectation:



Parents will do all they can to help their children learn from the time they're born.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

A huge amount of learning happens in the early years of life. Without a good start, children may fall behind and struggle at school. Parents have the greatest influence on their young children's learning. Other family members and early childhood services can assist.

CURRENT LAW

~~In order to be licensed to operate, early childhood education services must meet standards established by the Government (*The Education Act 1989*).~~

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How can the Government encourage parents and other family members to support their children's learning?
- New Zealand is doing well in the area of early childhood education for three and four-year-olds. What can we all do to support children's learning in the earlier years?
- Should parent support and education services be targeted more to families with the greatest needs? If so, how could this be done?

Issue: Getting children to school ready to learn



Facts:

- Most parents make sure their children go to school every day well prepared and ready to learn.
- Some parents don't support their children's learning well, eg they don't help them with homework or go to parent-teacher meetings or other school activities.
- Some children arrive at school too tired to learn or without breakfast or lunch. Some arrive under the influence of drugs.
- Truancy has become more of a problem over the last 10 years.
- There are a number of reasons why children don't attend school, eg they may have problems at home or school, or their parents may fail to make sure they are enrolled at school, or attend school regularly.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- Schools throughout New Zealand provide opportunities for quality education. The Government is the biggest funder of early childhood, school and tertiary education, spending just under \$7 billion.
- The Government provides some support for programmes which focus on improving school, parent and community links, eg exploratory projects to improve school, community and iwi liaison, and the Achievement in Multicultural High Schools project.
- District Truancy Services are being set up nationally to follow up schools' concerns about truants, patrol for children not attending school, and work with them, their families and schools to sort out truancy problems.

Expectation:



Parents will take responsibility for seeing that their children are well prepared for school, and attend every day ready to learn.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Children must attend school to gain the knowledge, skills and motivation to reach their potential. Education gives them a chance to participate fully in the modern world. Where parents support their children's learning, children learn and perform better.

CURRENT LAW

Parents must make sure their children are enrolled at school and attend school from the time they turn six until their 16th birthday. Most children start school from the age of five. If children are not enrolled or do not attend school, their parents are committing an offence and they may be fined. All schools have to take reasonable steps to make sure their students attend (The Education Act 1989).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What can we all do to help see that children attend school well prepared and ready to learn?
- What else can the Government do to make sure that children regularly attend school? eg Should parents who receive a benefit be required, as a condition of benefit, to get their children to school?

Issue: Young offenders



Facts:

- The number of offences involving young people being caught by the Police has increased from just under 36,000 offences in 1987 to more than 44,500 in 1996. The number of young offenders is much lower than this because many of them commit more than one offence.
- This increase in offending by young people matches that for the population as a whole.
- Offending by young people is likely to be petty and property-related. Much of it is casual and impulsive. A few young people who offend - estimated to be about 5% - go on to become serious and persistent offenders.
- Research shows that an important way to reduce youth offending is to improve parenting of young children.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- The Youth Aid section of the Police deals with youth offending. It provides education and advice and many offences are dealt with informally. More serious offending by children and young people is dealt with by the Police and the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Service through Family Group Conferences and Court hearings. There were 6,618 Family Group Conferences for young offenders in 1996/97.
- The Government provides residential care. Youth justice residences are being developed to provide more places and more specialist services for the most serious young offenders.
- The Government is spending \$7 million over the next three years on new programmes to reduce youth offending.

Expectation:



Children must not break the law. Parents will take responsibility for bringing their children up to be law-abiding members of society. When children do offend, families, communities and government agencies will work together to prevent re-offending.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Most families deal well with offending by their children and the offending stops. But where it continues, the young offender is more likely to become a serious and persistent adult offender, at great cost to themselves, their family and their community. We must try to prevent young offenders becoming adult offenders.

CURRENT LAW

Children may be held criminally responsible for offending when they are 10 years old, but 10 to 13-year-olds cannot be prosecuted in Court unless the offence is a very serious one, such as murder. Offending by 10 to 13-year-olds is dealt with by Youth Aid and Family Group Conferences and by Family Court proceedings (*The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989*).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How far should parents be held responsible for the actions of their children?
- Should the Courts have the power to make parents set curfews or attend parenting courses?
- Should the age at which children can be prosecuted in Court for an offence be lowered? If so, to what age?

Issue: Sharing parenthood



Facts:

- Children generally do best where parents share responsibility for their care. Research shows that in many cases responsibility for childcare falls heavily on women.
- In 1996 there were 126,700 sole parent families with dependent children in New Zealand. 85% were headed by women. An estimated 82% received the domestic purposes benefit.
- About 140,000 parents currently pay child support through Inland Revenue Child Support. 70% of parents pay on time and 85% pay within three months. However, some parents deliberately avoid their responsibility to financially support their children.
- Research shows that where parents are separated, the level of contact between the children and the parent who is not living with them usually falls off over time.
- All too often family violence causes family breakdown. A recent New Zealand survey showed that one in five women who had recently separated suffered multiple instances of abuse during the relationship.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- The Government funds services to assist families with relationship difficulties, and administers laws to protect the interests of children when families break up.
- Inland Revenue Child Support works out and collects child support payments. It passes them on to the person looking after the child if that person is not receiving a benefit. If a benefit is being paid to the person looking after the child, the child support payments go to the Government to help offset the cost of the benefit.

Expectation:



Parents will love and care for their children, support them financially and, where possible, share the parenting responsibilities, even when they are not living together.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The best interests of the child are the concern and responsibility of both parents. Children are entitled to know that their parents will continue to love and care for them even if they have separated. Children have the right to have contact with both parents unless this contact is harmful (*The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*).

CURRENT LAW

Parents not living with their children should support their children financially, according to their ability to pay. If parents are required to pay child support and do not pay it voluntarily, Inland Revenue Child Support will enforce payment (*The Child Support Act 1991*).

Courts must give first consideration to the welfare of the child in any proceedings where the custody or guardianship of, or access to, a child is in question (*The Guardianship Act 1968*).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What more can we all do to encourage fathers to play a more active part in bringing up their children?
- Where parents are separated, what more can be done to support the rights of the child to have contact with *both* parents on a regular basis?
- What else should the Government do to reinforce the responsibility of parents not living with their children to support them financially?

Issue: Training and learning for employment



Facts:

- People with education and training are more likely to get and stay in work than people who are unskilled or untrained.
- The world we live in is changing rapidly. People who continue to learn and develop new skills are more likely to get jobs and cope with change.
- As well as formal education and training, learning takes place informally at home, in the community and at work.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

The Government:

- Provides a wide variety of tertiary education and training such as universities, polytechs and other training services
- Supports organisations to run training programmes, including training by employers
- Pays some money directly to individuals for training (eg to almost 32,000 people on training benefit)
- Supports a range of second-chance education opportunities (eg it pays a training incentive allowance to help some beneficiaries get further education or training).

Expectation:



People will take responsibility for developing the skills and knowledge they need to help them get a job, or take on a new job.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

New Zealand is a small country and its people are its main resource. We need a highly skilled workforce to compete internationally. Knowledge and skills will be even more important in the 21st century. New Zealand has an open economy so it competes with the rest of the world to provide goods and services.

Individuals need to seek the education and training they require to develop their skills and win jobs.

CURRENT LAW

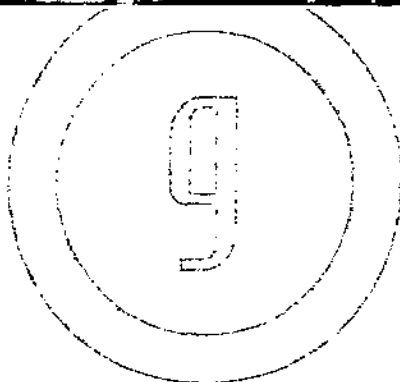
School students must go to school from their 6th until their 16th birthday (*The Education Act 1989*).

In return for the benefit, 44% of working-age beneficiaries (eg unemployment beneficiaries, domestic purposes beneficiaries with older children) are legally required to seek work and/or do training to help them get work (*The Social Security Act 1964*).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- If the Government funds a person to do further education or training, what should the Government and the taxpayer expect of that person in return?
- What groups of working-age beneficiaries should be required to accept training opportunities? (See p22 for current work and training requirements.)

Issue: Work obligations and income support



Facts:

- Most people have more money, independence and opportunities if they are in paid work.
- Despite job growth of more than 220,000 jobs between 1992 and 1997, the total number of working-age people on benefits rose by more than 21,000 over that time.
- The number of people on invalids and domestic purposes benefits (DPB) is steadily growing. The number of people on DPB in June 1995 was 104,000; in June 1997 it was 112,000; and in 2001 it is expected to be 125,000, given the continuation of current policies and practices in the income support system. The 1995 figure for invalids benefit was 40,000; the 1997 figure was 46,000; and in 2001 it is expected to be 60,500.
- People getting the unemployment benefit must seek work or do training to help them get a job. Work or training requirements now also apply to the partners of unemployment beneficiaries and to people on widows benefits or DPB, if they have no children or if their youngest child is 14 years or more.
- At the moment, there are no work-related requirements for people on sickness and invalids benefits, and for most people on DPB or widows benefit.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- The Government spends more than \$5 billion a year on benefit payments to more than 362,000 people aged 16 - 64, whose households include about 50,000 dependent spouses and 270,000 children (28% of all children under 17).
- In recent years, the Government has taken steps to encourage beneficiaries to move off their benefits as soon as possible (eg by work-testing people on DPB with children aged 14 and over).
- The Government provides assistance to job seekers, including help with seeking work, training and community work opportunities. The Government plans to maximise the involvement of unemployed job seekers in community work and training in return for a community wage. This will keep job seekers in contact with the workforce and maintain their motivation and skills.
- The merging of the NZ Employment Service and Income Support from October 1998 will improve services to job seekers.

Expectation:



People receiving income support will seek full-time or part-time work (where appropriate), or take steps to improve their chances of getting a job.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

People in paid work have a greater opportunity to improve their standard of living than those on benefits. It is important that the income support system works in ways which make it clear that getting a job is a priority.

CURRENT LAW

There are job search or work-related obligations for unemployment beneficiaries and other groups of beneficiaries, eg people on widows benefit or DPB whose youngest child is aged 14 or older have an obligation to look for work or do training. People can have their benefit reduced if they fail to do so (*The Social Security Act 1964*).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What more can the Government do to encourage beneficiaries into work?
- Is it fair to expect a working-age beneficiary to take up part-time or full-time work or training, when they have the ability to do so?
- Should a person on a benefit long-term who cannot take up part-time or full-time work be encouraged to do things such as community service?

Issue: Managing money



Facts:

- Most people manage their money well. But there are some who don't.
- In the year to June 1996, the Federation of Family Budgeting Services received more than 43,000 inquiries and worked with 32,500 people. They helped people with budgets and provided ongoing help and support. The debts owed by these people totalled over \$33 million.
- In some cases, community groups will only provide further assistance (eg food parcels) to a person if they also seek budget advice. In other cases, by agreement, a person's wage or benefit is managed for them by someone else.
- In the year to 30 June 1997, 373,000 special needs grants were made, totalling almost \$41 million. Over the same period, over 30,000 special benefits were granted at a cost of over \$74 million, giving a total expenditure of more than \$115 million.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- Special needs grants and special benefits are available for people in times of hardship or emergency. Income Support also refers people with budgeting problems to a free budget advice service. This is voluntary.
- Free budget advice services are available to people with money management problems. Beneficiaries have fast-track access to these services.

Expectation:



People will manage their money to meet the basic needs of themselves and their family.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

People who budget well have greater control of their lives. They are less dependent on other people, including taxpayers.

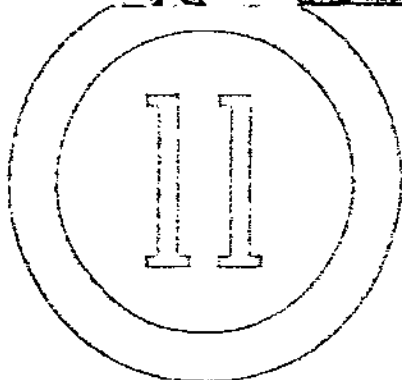
CURRENT LAW

Social security benefit payments can be made to an agent if, for example, a person is not mentally able to manage their own affairs (The Social Security Act 1964).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Should people who repeatedly seek emergency income support be made to have free budget advice? If so, at what point?
- Should the Government provide services to manage people's budgets? If so, under what circumstances? eg If a person on a benefit keeps applying for special needs grants, but refuses budget advice, should their benefit be paid through a money manager until the problem is sorted out?

Issue: Keeping ourselves healthy



Facts:

- Around a quarter of New Zealanders smoke cigarettes. 4,500 people die each year as a result of smoking and half of all smokers will die early, mainly from heart disease and cancer.
- Heavy drinking of alcohol is linked with liver and heart damage, high blood pressure and some types of cancer. It is also a major contributory factor to fatal road crashes. Of the 514 people killed in road crashes in 1996, alcohol was a factor in the death of 148.
- There is wisdom in the saying "use it or lose it"! At least 30 minutes of exercise done in short bursts over the day - like brisk walking or taking the stairs - can make a big difference to your health and reduce the risk of heart disease and strokes.
- To keep healthy, people should eat a variety of foods each day, including vegetables, fruits, bread and cereals.
- Youth suicide rates in New Zealand have been increasing. Suicide is now the second most common cause of death amongst 15 to 24-year-olds. Most people who attempt or commit suicide are depressed or have a drug or alcohol problem.
- Mental health disorders are common, with two-thirds of New Zealanders experiencing at least one occurrence in their lifetime. The most common disorders are anxiety, alcohol abuse and major depression. Mental illness accounts for almost one-third of disabilities.
- 19% of New Zealanders have a disability.

HOW THE GOVERNMENT HELPS NOW

- The Government funds public health services, health education materials and health promotion programmes, such as the "Why start?" campaign against smoking. It also funds national disease prevention programmes such as the cervical cancer screening programme. It is planning to provide free breast cancer screening to women aged between 50 and 64.
- The Government promotes sports, fitness and active leisure through the Hillary Commission and Regional Sports Trusts.
- Specialist mental health services cater for about 54,300 people each year and disability support services cater for about 110,000 people each year.

Expectation:



People will do all they can to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Failure to look after our own health is costly - it can reduce our enjoyment of life, the choices we can make, the length of our life, and the well-being of our families and children.

Society also pays when we don't take care of ourselves. There are huge demands on our health system. Many illnesses and injuries could be prevented if people had healthier lifestyles.

CURRENT LAW

~~Smoking in the workplace and most tobacco advertising is banned. It is illegal to sell tobacco products to people under the age of 18 (*The Smoke-Free Environments Act 1990*).~~

~~The sale and supply of liquor to the public is controlled (*The Sale of Liquor Act 1989*). The misuse of drugs is also controlled in law (*The Misuse of Drugs Act 1975*).~~

~~It is illegal to drive with a blood alcohol concentration of more than 80mg of alcohol per 100mls of blood (*The Transport Act 1962*).~~

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What else can the Government do to encourage people not to smoke, to eat healthier food, to exercise more and use alcohol only in moderation?
- What can we all do to make sure that people with early symptoms of psychological problems seek help?

Issue: Status of the Code

Remember the aims of the Code are to:

- Make it clear how people are expected to meet their responsibilities
- Influence behaviour
- Set out guidelines for policy development
- Provide a starting point for ongoing discussion.

Questions:

Should the Code be:

- 1 Published as a statement of government policy?
- 2 Passed into law to influence the development of policy and new legislation?
- 3 Set out as guidelines without being in law to influence the development of policy and new legislation?
- 4 Put into relevant sections of existing legislation, such as the Social Security Act?

Every care was taken to ensure that the information contained in this document was accurate at the time of publication. The photographs portray models in fictional scenes and are not intended to represent particular people or actual events.

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Copies of the booklet are available in Maori, Samoan, Cook Islands Maori, Tongan and Chinese by calling Freephone 0800 400 100 (weekdays 7am - 6pm).

Māori

Mehemea ka hiahia koe tētahi kape o te pukapuka whakamārama nei i roto i te reo Māori, āta waea mai i runga i te waea kore utu 0800 400 100 i waenganui i te 7 i te ata ki te 6 i te ahiahi, mai i te Mane ki te Paraire.

Samoan

Afai e te mana'o i se kopi o lenei tama'i tusi i le gagana Samoa, e lelei pe a e telefoni mai i le telefoni e vili fua o le 0800 400 100 i le va o le 7 i le taeao i le 6 i afiafi mai i le aso Gafua e o'o atu i le aso Faraile.

Cook Islands Maori

Me ka inangaro koe i tetahi kopi o teia puka naau i roto i te reo Kuki Airani, me ringi mai koe i teia numero tereponi, 0800 400 100, te kare rava koe e tutaki, i rotopu i te ora 6 i te popongi ki te ora 7 i te aia, mei te Monite mai ki te Varaire.

Tongan

'Okapau teke fiema'u ha tatau 'o e tohi ni'i he lea faka-Tonga, pea ke telefoni mai ki he fika, 0800 400 100, ta'etotongi 'i he vaha'a 'o e 6 pongipongi mo e 7 efiafi, Monite ki he Falaite.

Chinese

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