



MANAAKITIA A TATOU TAMARIKI

**CHILDREN'S
COMMISSIONER**

Children's Commissioner
Statement of Intent
2012 – 2015

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Contents

Commissioner's foreword	5
PART ONE: OPERATING ENVIRONMENT	9
Nature and scope of functions	9
<i>Our purpose</i>	9
<i>Our role</i>	9
Legislative framework	9
Our values	10
<i>Organisational context</i>	10
Our outputs and priorities	13
<i>Monitoring and investigating</i>	13
<i>Individual and systemic advocacy</i>	13
Hearing children's voices	13
Governance and management	14
Stakeholder relationships	14
PART TWO: OUR DIRECTION – WHAT WE WILL DO	15
Strategic direction	15
Office of the Children's Commissioner Outcomes framework 2012-2015	16
Operating intentions	17
<i>Outcome 1: Child health</i>	17
<i>Outcome 2: Children growing up in poverty</i>	20
<i>Outcome 3: Education</i>	23
<i>Outcome 4: Abuse and neglect</i>	26
<i>Underpinning strategies</i>	29
Organisational health and capability	31
<i>Our people</i>	31
<i>Effective governance</i>	32
<i>Our communications</i>	33
<i>Our relationships</i>	34
<i>Our commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi</i>	34
Measures and standards for organisational health and capability	34
<i>Consultation and reporting to the responsible Minister</i>	36
PART 3: STATEMENT OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION	37
Prospective statement of service performance and financial information	37
Statement of Responsibility	37
Statement of service performance	38
Output: Monitoring and investigating	41
Financial Statements	43
<i>Prospective statement of comprehensive income</i>	43
<i>Prospective statement of comprehensive financial position</i>	44
<i>Prospective statement of movement in equity</i>	44
<i>Prospective statement of cash flows</i>	45
<i>Statement of accounting policies</i>	46
APPENDICES	51
Appendix one – Statutory functions	51
Appendix two – Organisational structure	53
Appendix three – Glossary	54

Commissioner's foreword

Ki te kahore he whakakitenga ka ngaro te iwi

Without foresight or vision the people will be lost

I am pleased to present this Statement of Intent, which sets out my priorities for 2012-2015.

As the sixth Children's Commissioner I am very aware that I am "standing on the shoulders of giants". I have come into an organisation with healthy finances, sound financial and management systems and a strong reputation for advocating for the interests of children.

While most of New Zealand's children do well, a substantial proportion do not do as well as they should. A fifth of our children live in poverty, which has profound and lifelong consequences across many aspects of their lives. Māori and Pacific children have disease and death rates typically 2-4 times that of other children. Our rates of child abuse are high by international standards. And while New Zealand students do very well in international achievement tests on average, we also have one of the highest differences in achievement between the best and worst achieving students. None of these are acceptable to New Zealanders and all can be changed, if we choose to.

The Office will therefore have four major priorities for the next four years; children's health, child poverty, early childhood education, and child abuse and neglect.

In child health I would like to *share innovation and best practice in child health* through a scorecard of District Health Boards' (DHBs) child health services. The scorecard would be a partnership with the Paediatric Society of New Zealand and the Health Quality and Safety Commission. When the scorecard last ran in 2004 it was a powerful tool for sharing best practice.

I have commissioned an *Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty* (EAG) to advise me on this critical determinant of child well-being. The EAG will be supported by a secretariat of my own and seconded senior staff. I have asked the co-chairs to provide me with a concise, robust, pragmatic report focusing on short term solutions for immediate effect, and longer term solutions that will require more policy analysis. The project will work in parallel with the Ministerial Working Group on Poverty, chaired by Minister English and will report in December 2012.

My Office has particular expertise in early childhood education (ECE) so I have decided to focus on *participation and quality in ECE*. I am particularly concerned about participation rates for Māori and Pacific children. My experience is that access to such services works best when local health, social services and the ECE sector work together collaboratively. We will work with the sector and the Ministry of Education to find areas where we can add value to the existing work in these areas already underway.

I have been pleased to see the progress made in improving care and protection social work systems and practice in Child, Youth and Family. My Office has an

excellent relationship with Child, Youth and Family and I look forward to developing this further. The Office's monitoring team has had an increase in capacity, which will be applied to further improving the quality of monitoring of sites and residences, increasing the number of sites visited each year, improving the robustness of reporting back on progress on recommendations made for improvements in Child, Youth and Family, thematic reviews that draw on our experience across several sites and extending our monitoring to Section 396 providers.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner is New Zealand's leading child advocacy organisation and the Commissioner is the nation's chief advocate for children. But saying one is a leader doesn't make it so – we have to earn that role. To do this, we must be:

- **Honest brokers of the evidence:** we will continue to provide independent advice to government on matters affecting children that is evidence based, balanced and pragmatic.
- **Clear about our values:** all our work will be solidly grounded in our values, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) and Treaty of Waitangi principles.
- **Courageous:** we will take the lead in debates on complex issues when we need to and ensure children's voices are heard.
- **Collaborative:** We will work collaboratively with our stakeholders in government, the NGO sector, professional bodies and other organisations to ensure the best outcomes for children.
- **Accountable:** we will continuously improve our performance by modelling best practice in public sector management and reporting our outcomes.

These themes appear throughout this Statement of Intent (SOI).

Underpinning strategies that support our four priorities include promoting UNCROC, capturing children's voices, ensuring our advice is child-centred and advocating for individual children. Alongside these strategies we need a strong foundation of skilled people working together in a well run organisation.

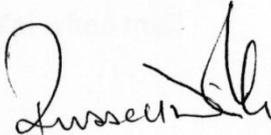
Part 2 of the SOI finishes with our strategies to grow our organisational health and capability. We will invest in our staff, develop our relationships with key stakeholders, further develop our systems and processes, develop our commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and improve our communications.

The SOI discusses how we will model these attributes to achieve our four priorities and how we will report on our progress with them over the remaining four years of my term.

In signing this statement, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information contained in the Statement of Intent for the Office of the Children's Commissioner. This information has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance Act 1989. It is also consistent with the proposed appropriations set out in the Appropriations (2012/13 Estimates) Bill, as presented to the House of Representatives in accordance with section 13 of the Public Finance Act 1989, and with existing appropriations and financial authorities.

Mō tātou, ā, mō ngā uri a muri ake nei.

For us and our children after us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Russell Wills', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Dr Russell Wills MB, ChB, Dip Obst, DCH, FRACP, MPH
Children's Commissioner

PART ONE: OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Nature and scope of functions

Our purpose

The Children's Commissioner is an independent advocate for the interests, rights and well-being of New Zealand's children and young people up to the age of 18 on law, policies, practices and other matters that affect them.

We have a particular responsibility to monitor the quality of services provided to children under the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 (CYPF Act).

The position of Children's Commissioner was established in 1989, separate from the executive and administrative arms of government. Its independence was reinforced in 2003 and 2004 when given its own statute, the Children's Commissioner Act 2003¹, and the status of an independent Crown entity.

Our role

The Act sets out two main functions. The first is to monitor, assess and report on services provided under the CYPF Act. We do this by reviewing the strategies, policies and practices of agencies operating under the Act, reviewing operations and obtaining feedback from stakeholders. Much of the focus is on the services of Child, Youth and Family. We review samples of cases, visit sites and residences and talk to children, young people and other stakeholders.

The second main function is to advocate for the interests, rights and well-being of children. This advocacy function is carried out by investigating individual complaints, providing advice to Select Committees, Ministers, Crown entities and local and non-government organisations and raising awareness of children's interests among New Zealanders generally.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner's primary outcome is to ensure that *New Zealand is a place where children can thrive*.

Legislative framework

The Children's Commissioner operates under the Children's Commissioner Act 2003. Our actions are also guided by UNCROC, which New Zealand ratified in 1993. This convention sets out goals for children's well-being and defines the obligations of governments to take the best interests of children into account in their laws, policies and operations.

We have a statutory responsibility under Section 12 of the Act to raise awareness and understanding of the Convention and to advance and monitor the application of the Convention by departments of State and other instruments of the Crown.

The Children's Commissioner is gazetted as a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Crimes of Torture Amendment Act 2003.

¹ See appendix one for a list of the Children's Commissioner's statutory functions.

Our values

The Office operates by the following values:

- Diversity – the Office values diversity and respects the dignity of every person that we engage with. We acknowledge and celebrate diversity, difference and open-mindedness, and recognise the multitude of views and perspectives held by New Zealanders.
- Respecting Tangata Whenua – the Office values and respects the place of Tangata Whenua in New Zealand.
- Working with others – the Office works in partnership with Government, iwi, community organisations and individuals to achieve shared outcomes.
- Willing spirit – We work with a willing spirit. We are positive, responding easily to new challenges and opportunities, taking responsibility for our work. We go the extra mile.
- Sincerity – We work to fulfill our purpose. We work with a sincere desire for better outcomes. We assume the best of intentions in others. We are straightforward, direct and engaging.
- Strategically focused – We know the big picture. We think about how best to make an impact. We work with others focused on improving outcomes for children in New Zealand.
- Integrity – We act in a way that protects the integrity of the Office. We act to build trust through our behaviour
- Honouring the Treaty of Waitangi – the Office values and respects the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of the nation.

We have developed a tikanga framework under the concepts of:

- *aroha – kōrero, compassion, care and empathy for others and also for the self*
- *pono – kōrero, being truthful and acting with integrity*
- *tika – kōrero, doing things right, for the right reasons, for the long term benefit of the collective*
- *matauranga – kōrero, knowledge, comprehension, or understanding.*

Organisational context

Children and young people make up a large part of New Zealand's population.² Just over one million of New Zealand's citizens are under the age of 18 years (26 percent of the population). Amongst New Zealand's ethnic groups, Māori and Pasifika³ populations have much higher proportions of children within them.

The majority of New Zealand children and their families enjoy a high quality of life and experience good outcomes. This is reflected in New Zealand's high international ratings in comparative surveys measuring quality of life and in areas such as educational attainment.

² Statistics New Zealand, *2006 Census Statistics*. 2006, Statistics New Zealand: Wellington.

³ We refer to the seven main Island groups as our reference point for describing Pasifika children.

However, a significant proportion of New Zealand's children do not experience the good outcomes the majority enjoy. The circumstances of these children are reflected in New Zealand's poor rating in international comparisons of child health and wellbeing and in our level of investment in young children.⁴

Poverty is the common denominator amongst this group, within which Māori and Pasifika children are particularly over-represented. Children in the care and protection system, children with disabilities, and children from refugee and migrant backgrounds also disproportionately experience poor outcomes.

A high proportion of the Māori population are children - children aged 0 – 14 years make up 35.4 percent of the Māori population – and they bear a disproportionate burden of ill-health, poverty and neglect. Māori children are more than four times more likely to die from Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) and twice as likely to die from youth suicide.⁵ Māori children experience high rates of serious preventable diseases such as rheumatic fever, meningitis, serious skin infections, bronchiectasis, injury, and abuse and neglect.⁶

Educational outcomes for Māori children, however, are steadily improving, associated with the establishment of initiatives such as Kohanga Reo, Kura Teina, Kura Kaupapa, Whare Wananga and more recently Whanau Ora. Early childhood education enrolment rates are improving, as are the rates of Māori school-leavers qualified to attend university and participating in modern apprenticeships.

The Pasifika population in New Zealand is steadily increasing. Like Māori, Pasifika peoples are a youthful population, with 38 percent aged under 15 years at the time of the last census in 2006.

Like Māori children, Pasifika children experience disproportionate levels of poverty and ill-health. Pasifika children experience the highest levels of severe overcrowding and inadequate housing – a significant risk factor in their health outcomes.

Education outcomes are improving at both ends of the spectrum and it is notable that Pasifika initiatives such as aoga mata (early childhood language nest), and island specific immersion classes at primary school level receive strong community and church support for early learning and children's languages and cultures. Enrolment rates in early education services have increased more than for all other ethnic groups, although remain significantly lower than other groups.⁷ Attainment rates of NCEA 1 and 2 have increased by 24 percent in four years.⁸

Funding

Substantial government resources are invested in children, for example, \$443m is spent on services to children through Child, Youth and Family, \$460m on spending supporting children with special education needs and \$138m on child and adolescent mental health services. The Office of the Children's Commissioner's is a small part of

⁴ 2009 Doing Better for Children NZ Country Highlights, OECD.

⁵ <http://socialreport.msd.govt.nz/health/suicide.html>

⁶ Craig, E., et al., *Monitoring the Health of New Zealand Children and Young People: Indicator Handbook*. 2007, Paediatric Society of New Zealand and New Zealand Child and Youth Epidemiology Service: Auckland.

⁷ Angus, J. and Carroll-Lind, J., *Through their lens: An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers*. 2011, Office of the Children's Commissioner: Wellington.

⁸ MOE – educationcounts.govt.nz

the overall spend on children. The Office is allocated \$2.16m to deliver the services outlined in the following section.

Our outputs and priorities

The Children's Commissioner provides a range of services under two output classes:

- monitoring and investigating
- individual and systemic advocacy.

Monitoring and investigating

Our monitoring work includes:

- independent monitoring and assessment of the policies and practices of Child, Youth and Family and other agencies providing services under the CYPF Act by conducting routine visits to sites and residences⁹ across New Zealand and investigation of broader systemic issues
- acting as a National Preventive Mechanism with specific responsibility for monitoring the safety and treatment of children in nine residences established under Section 364 of the CYPF Act through routine and unannounced visits to these residences.

Individual and systemic advocacy

Our advocacy work gives effect to the general functions of the Commissioner set out in Section 12 of the Children's Commissioner Act and includes:

- providing a toll-free Child Rights Line to provide members of the public with information or advice on issues concerning children
- giving independent advice that reflects the interests, rights and well-being of children to government and non-government policy makers and operational decision makers
- making submissions to Select Committees examining Parliamentary Bills and/or undertaking enquiries
- undertaking specific projects focusing on priority areas identified by the Office
- promoting UNCROC
- delivering speeches and presentations on issues that concern children's interests, rights and welfare
- issuing media statements on relevant children's issues
- distributing resources that promote best practice and information on issues relating to children's interests, rights and welfare
- publishing *Children* magazine four times a year.

Hearing children's voices

The Commissioner has a statutory obligation to obtain the views of children and young people. A Young People's Reference Group (YPRG), a group of young people aged from 12 up to 18 years from around New Zealand, provides advice to assist the Office with its obligations to consult with children. The YPRG does this by building

⁹ There are currently 59 nationwide sites (inclusive of sub sites). There are eight residences throughout New Zealand plus one residence which is run by Barnardos.

regional networks, finding out what young people in their region think about issues and by engaging in existing structures such as schools, youth councils, church groups, cultural groups, and other networks. The YPRG can also give advice to other government agencies on policies, services and programmes being developed for children and young people.

Governance and management

The Commissioner is classified as a corporation sole. This means that the Commissioner is not only responsible for carrying out his/her statutory functions, but also has the individual and collective responsibilities of the board of the entity as set out in the Crown Entities Act 2004.

The Commissioner's governance role is supported by the Deputy Commissioner, General Manager, Office Manager and Principal Advisor (Media and Communications), who make up the Management team. Independent governance advice is sought from the Ministry of Social Development.

Stakeholder relationships

Because the Office is independent, we straddle across and work with multiple sectors. A diverse range of organisations, groups and individuals who have responsibilities and powers relating to children – together with children themselves – constitute our key stakeholders. These include the Families Commission, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa New Zealand and Every Child Counts.

The Office has responsibilities under the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) and works in this regard with the Human Rights Commission, the Independent Police Conduct Authority, the Office of the Ombudsmen and the Armed Forces.

PART TWO: OUR DIRECTION – WHAT WE WILL DO

Strategic direction

The causes of the poor outcomes experienced by children are complex and multi-systemic. However, when addressing this issue, four areas stand out as being of immediate and fundamental concern – *child health, child poverty, education, and child abuse and neglect*. These will be the four key outcome areas where the Office will focus its efforts over the next four years. In focusing on these four strategies, we will be able to make the maximum impact with the resources available to us. The impacts we seek to make are in areas that are complex policy and social problems. Accordingly, we will be making our contribution alongside the work of many others.

Underpinning strategies

A further four underpinning strategies are needed to ensure the Office can deliver results in our four outcome areas. The underpinning strategies are:

- advocating for individuals
- promoting and increasing understanding of UNCROC
- capturing children's voices
- child-centred policy advice.

While focusing on these outcomes, we will ensure that our work remains targeted and relevant for the long term and is undertaken cost effectively.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner Outcomes framework 2012-2015, on the following page, summarises how our work will impact on these outcomes.

Office of the Children's Commissioner Outcomes framework 2012-2015

Goal	New Zealand is a place where children thrive					
Outcomes	More children grow up healthy		More children grow up with access to adequate resources		More children achieve their education potential	More children are free from all forms of abuse and neglect
Impacts	Increased focus by DHBs on child health outcomes	Fewer children growing up in poverty Reduced impact of poverty on children		More Māori and Pasifika children engage in ECE	ECE services are of higher quality	Services delivered under the CYPF Act are of high quality
Output classes	INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY				MONITORING AND INVESTIGATING	
Outputs	DHB Scorecard Disseminate innovation and best practice	Advice on solutions to child poverty Generate advice on solutions to reduce child poverty in New Zealand		Report on ECE engagement	Advocating for high quality ECE services	Monitoring Child, Youth and Family Monitor CYF residences and sites Undertake thematic reviews
Underpinning strategies	Promoting and raising awareness of UNCROC	Including children's voices		Child-centred policy advice		Advocating for individual children
Capability	People	Communication	Relationships	Organisational capability	Systems and processes	Commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi
Foundations	Children's Commissioner's Act 2003 Treaty of Waitangi The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC)					

Operating intentions

Outcome 1: Child health

More children grow up healthy

New Zealand's child health and wellbeing outcomes are poor by international standards.^{10,11,12} Compared to children from other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, New Zealand children experience especially high levels of infectious disease, injury, maltreatment, social morbidity and suicide.^{10,11,12} Mortality rates have declined over time, however the decline has been less than that of other prosperous nations and inequalities have persisted or even widened.¹³

Childhood is a critical period in life for laying the foundations for life-long health and well-being.^{11,12} Childhood is a key period for investing in human capital development and in reducing inequities and there is a high social and economic cost to the nation of a poor start in life.^{14,15}

There are stark differences in many child health indicators between population groups in New Zealand.¹⁶ The mortality rate for infants in our least deprived neighbourhoods is the same as the best-performing countries in the OECD.¹¹ However, the infant mortality rate in our poorest neighbourhoods is worse than in most OECD countries. Children living in more deprived neighbourhoods have disproportionately high rates of unintentional injury, maltreatment, dental caries¹⁷, SUDI (Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy), and higher hospitalisation rates for a number of conditions such as bronchiolitis, rheumatic fever and pneumonia.^{13,16}

Māori and Pasifika children experience a particularly high burden of poor health. Māori and Pasifika children growing up New Zealand are much more likely to experience socioeconomic deprivation and have higher rates of poor health.¹⁶

Hospitalisation rates for conditions related to social-economic deprivation (such as acute respiratory infections) **have increased significantly** between 2007 and 2010.¹⁸ Pasifika children have by far the greatest number of admissions (approx 80 per 1000), followed by Maori children (approx 60 per 1000) with European and Asian children having significantly lower rates (approx 30 per 1000).

¹⁰ OECD, *Doing Better for Children*. 2009, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: Paris.

¹¹ Public Health Advisory Committee, *The Best Start in Life*. 2010, Ministry of Health: Wellington.

¹² Gluckman P, Hayne H. *Improving the Transition: Reducing social and psychological morbidity during adolescence*. 2011, Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, Auckland, 2011.

¹³ CYMRC, *Fifth Report to the Minister of Health: Reporting mortality 2002–2008*. 2009, Child and Youth Mortality Review Committee: Wellington.

¹⁴ Commission on Social Determinants of Health, *Closing the gap in a generation: Final Report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health*. 2008, World Health Organization: Geneva.

¹⁵ Infometrics Ltd, *1000 days to get it right for every child The effectiveness of public investment in New Zealand children*, In *Every Child Counts Discussion Paper Number 2*. Wellington: Every Child Counts; 2011.

¹⁶ Craig E, Jackson C, Han DY, et al. *Monitoring the Health of NZ Children and Young People: Indicator Handbook*. Auckland: Paediatric Society of NZ and NZ Child and Youth Epidemiology Service; 2007.

¹⁷ Ministry of Health. 2010. *Our Oral Health: Key findings of the 2009 New Zealand Oral Health Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

¹⁸ NZ Child & Youth Epidemiology Service, *The Children's Social Health Monitor 2011 Update*. 2011, Dunedin: NZ Child & Youth Epidemiology Service.

What we will do

We would like to implement a *District Health Board Scorecard for Children and Young People*. The Scorecard is a clinician-led tool and process for disseminating best practice and innovation across DHBs. The process supports clinicians to identify and agree best practice, assess uptake of that practice across DHBs, assess how well the practice is being performed, present that in a readily understandable format and connect services implementing the practice well with those who are not. We will work with the Ministry of Health and other government agencies to increase the priority given to children across all policies, programmes and activities which impact on health.

Impact we want to make

The impact of our work will be an increased priority given to child and youth health by Government agencies and DHBs. The Scorecard's impacts include improved planning and reporting for children's services in DHBs; improved collaboration between clinicians and managers, and between DHBs and their stakeholders in child health; and increased uptake of innovative and best practice solutions in child health.

What we want to achieve

Over time, an increased priority given to child and youth health by Government agencies and DHBs will lead to better and more equitable health outcomes for children and young people. DHB child health services will have a more consistent practice in planning and reporting, improved management-clinician partnerships, better collaboration between health and other services and more consistent uptake of best practice.

Why us?

The Office will bring an independent, objective and child-centred focus to this work. The Office has the responsibility and mandate to advocate for children. The Commissioner and the Office have extensive expertise in child health.

Who we will work with

We hope to partner with the Paediatric Society of New Zealand (PSNZ) and the Health Quality and Safety Commission (HQSC) for this project. Each organisation brings specific capability and expertise to the project. We believe that there are benefits from combining a strong clinician-driven process, a quality improvement approach, and the independence and statutory role of this Office.

How this contributes to government priorities

Our work will contribute to the Ministry of Health broader outcome of "ensuring New Zealand has a high-quality health and disability system, such that New Zealanders live longer, healthier and more independent lives, and New Zealand's economic growth is supported."

How we will measure progress

Actual 2010/11	Measure	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Target 2014/15
	Impact measure				
New in 2012/13	Percentage of District Health Boards who respond that the scorecard has impacted positively on their decision-making in relation to child-health matters.	New in 2012/13	Baseline established	Increasing	Increasing
	Outcome indicator				
New in 2012/13	Ambulatory sensitive hospital (ASH) admission rates ¹⁹	New in 2012/13	Decreasing	Decreasing	Decreasing
New in 2012/13	Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy rates ²⁰	New in 2012/13	Decreasing	Decreasing	Decreasing

¹⁹ Ambulatory Sensitive Hospitalisations (ASH): Hospitalisations due to diseases potentially avoidable through prevention or treatment delivered in primary care, for example, vaccine-preventable diseases, asthma, and gastroenteritis.

²⁰ Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI): an umbrella term for the unexpected death of an infant (under one year of age), without warning signs sufficient to alert parents or caregivers. There is a spectrum including deaths that remain unexplained following full investigation (SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) through to cases which are fully explained (for example, from suffocation).

Outcome 2: Children growing up in poverty

More children grow up with access to adequate resources

Why is this important

The proportion of children living in poverty is too high and has risen sharply. The proportion of children aged 0-17 living below the income poverty line (60 percent of median household income) after housing costs stood at 25 percent in 2010.²¹ In 1986 the level was 10 percent. Poverty rates were highest for children aged 7-11 years, followed by children aged 0-6 years.

Too many children experience material hardship. Hardship rates for children aged 0-17 years are higher than the overall New Zealand population and nearly five times those of the 65+ age group.²² Fifty-one percent of Pasifika children and 39 percent of Māori children experience high levels of deprivation due to low family income.²³

Many children live in overcrowded houses. Approximately 50 percent of Pasifika children and 25 percent of Māori children live in overcrowded housing conditions, compared to 5 percent of European children. Overall, 44 percent of children who live in the most deprived areas live in overcrowded conditions.²⁴

The high proportion of children living in poverty has important consequences for the health, wellbeing and productivity of the population. Children living in poverty experience high levels of social deprivation, poor living standards, poor health outcomes and lower educational attainment. Disadvantage continues throughout an individual's life, particularly in terms of employability, income and mental health.

What we will do

The Commissioner has commissioned an *Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on Solutions to Child Poverty*. The EAG is comprised of New Zealanders eminent in fields relevant to this issue including business, economics, law, primary care, housing, education, longitudinal research, Māori and Pacific, health and social services.

The EAG has been tasked to identify long- and short-term solutions to child poverty that are based on the best international evidence and experience, are pragmatic and that recognise the current economic environment. The EAG will release an Issues and Options Paper in August for consultation and testing of ideas within relevant Ministries. A final Report will be released in December, to inform the government's Ministerial Committee on Poverty.

Impact we want to make

The report will provide Government with pragmatic, realistic, evidence-based advice on solutions to child poverty and its effects.

²¹ 2011 Child Social Health Monitor, NZCYES p22 Figure 5

²² MSD, New Zealand Living Standards Survey 2008 – Key Findings – p3, Dec 2009

²³ 2011 Child Social Health Monitor, NZCYES - p26

²⁴ Office of the Children's Commissioner, A Fair Go for Children, 2008 p 57

What we want to achieve

Implementation by Government of cost effective, readily achievable short term actions to reduce child poverty and its effects; and longer term measures designed to reduce child poverty and its effects.

Why us

The Office is independent of Government and its statutory role and purpose is to advocate for the interests, rights and well-being of children. We will use this position to bring together eminent New Zealanders with the skills to address this complex issue.

Who we will work with

The EAG will consist of a group of experts in the various fields relevant to the issue of child poverty, representing academia, economics, public policy, communities, Māori and Pasifika.

The EAG will seek community feedback on their ideas. Children and young people will be engaged by the Office of the Children's Commissioner and their views made available for the Advisory Group's consideration.

How this contributes to government priorities

This work also contributes to the Government's goal to "support vulnerable children".

How we will measure progress

Actual 2010/11	Measure	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Target 2014/15
	Impact measure				
New in 2012/13	The Ministerial Committee on Poverty considers advice from Children's Commissioner	New in 2012/13	Advice considered	Advice considered	Advice considered
	Outcome indicator				
New in 2012/13	% of children in households with <60% median income ²⁵	New in 2012/13	Decreasing	Decreasing	Decreasing
New in 2012/13	% of children in households experiencing material hardship or low living standards ²⁶	New in 2012/13	Decreasing	Decreasing	Decreasing

²⁵ Standard used to measure child poverty. Data will be sourced from the annual Household Economic Survey.

²⁶ Measured using the percentage of children reporting greater than "four enforced lacks". Data will be sourced from the annual Household Economic Survey.

Outcome 3: Education

More children achieve their education potential

Why is this important

There is disproportionate access to quality early childhood education.

New Zealand has high overall enrolment rates in early childhood education and enrolment rates for Māori and Pasifika children have increased significantly over the past decade but remain lower than for other ethnic groups.²⁷ Participation (engagement) rates are unknown because this data is not routinely analysed. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Māori and Pacific children may participate/ engage in ECE at lower rates than their enrolment figures suggest, and this may contribute to poor educational outcomes for these children. The most significant growth area is for the under two-year-old age group where I have both educational and health concerns about the quality of provision.²⁸

What we will do

We will undertake a research project to better understand why particularly Māori and Pasifika children do not engage, or do not engage for sustained periods in ECE. We will provide our findings to the Ministry of Education and other government agencies to inform their work in this area.

We advocate to the ECE sector to improve the quality of services. In this regard we are particularly interested in ECE for children under two years, whose needs are different to children 3-5 years. Our advocacy will be based on the report this Office released in 2011, *Through their lens. An inquiry in to non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers.*

Impact we want to make

We seek to make two impacts:

- more Māori and Pasifika children are engaged in ECE
- the quality of ECE services delivered to children (notably to those under two-years-old) increases.

What we want to achieve

The ECE sector and policy makers will have a better understanding of ECE participation rates for Māori, Pasifika and other children, reasons for differences and evidence-based strategies to reduce inequalities in participation.

The Ministry and the sector also have an improved understanding of what quality in ECE means for children, particularly those under two years and there are robust strategies in place to ensure that quality is high.

²⁷ MOE – educationcounts.govt.nz

²⁸ Angus, J. and Carroll-Lind, J., *Through their lens: An inquiry into non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers.* 2011, Office of the Children's Commissioner: Wellington.

Why us

The Office brings an independent, objective and child-focused lens to this issue. The Office has specific expertise in ECE, including in the key areas of participation and quality of ECE and has published in this area previously.

Who we will work with

We will work with early childhood sector and service providers in identified areas; children enrolled in the services as well as children not enrolled but eligible to attend; parents; whanau/fanau; teachers; senior staff in identified services; and community-based agencies.

We will also work with the Ministry of Education and other agencies working in the education sector.

How this contributes to government priorities

The work programme above will directly support the Ministry of Education's focus on "improving education system performance for all students, and in particular for those groups of students currently under-served by the system – Māori students, Pasifika students, students from low socio-economic communities and students with special education needs" as well as its priority to increase rates of participation in high-quality early childhood education for Māori students, Pasifika students and students from low socio-economic communities.

This work also contributes to the Prime Minister's results for New Zealanders to "increase participation in early childhood education".

How we will measure progress

Actual 2010/11	Measure	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Target 2014/15
	Impact measure				
New in 2012/13	ECE sector representatives report that OCC advocacy has impacted positively on their practices.	New in 2012/13	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing
New in 2012/13	Ministry of Education reports that the Office's research has contributed positively to their ECE participation policy work.	New in 2012/13	Positive contribution reported	Positive contribution reported	Positive contribution reported
	Outcome indicator				
New in 2012/13	The number of Māori and Pasifika children, under two, that are enrolled and regularly attending in early childhood education	New in 2012/13	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing

Outcome 4: Abuse and neglect

More children are free from all forms of abuse and neglect

Why is this important

Too many children need hospital admission for assault, neglect and maltreatment. Hospital admission rates for assault, neglect and maltreatment have declined slightly from 2000 to 2010. However, children who live in New Zealand's most deprived areas have rates of admissions under these grounds that are nearly six times that of those children living in the least deprived areas.²⁹

Too many children die from maltreatment. Mortality as a result of assault, abuse or neglect fluctuates from year to year. However, on average seven children die each year as a result of maltreatment. Between 2003 and 2008, 68 children aged under 19 years died as a result of assault. 11 of those were aged under 1 year-old and 12 between 1 and 4 years-old.³⁰

Too many children experience abuse and neglect. In 2010, reports of concern to Child, Youth and Family requiring further action numbered 55,494 cases and substantiated abuse was found in 26,129 (41 percent).³¹ Of these cases, emotional abuse was the most common, followed by behaviour/relationship concerns, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and self harm.³² The total numbers of child clients of Child, Youth and Family rose by over 30 percent from 2009 to 2010.^{33,34} Approximately 46 percent of Child, Youth and Family child clients are Māori, 36 percent European and 10 percent Pasifika.

Too many children are exposed to family violence. Numbers of police family violence attendances have steadily increased over the past four years, although the rate of increase has declined. Police attendances increased 8.5 percent from 2008/9 to 2009/10, down from 13.1 percent the previous year.³⁵ Children are present at the vast majority of family violence incidents attended by police.³⁶ Police estimate that only 18 percent of family violence incidents are reported.

Too many young people are offending. There continues to be a downward trend in the rate of police apprehensions of young people. However there are still concerning statistics that relate to an increase in the number of apprehensions for violent offences; the overrepresentation of young Māori in the youth justice system; and the fact that females now make up a larger proportion of the overall youth justice statistics.³⁷

²⁹ 2011 Child Social Health Monitor, NZCYES, Key Points emerging from 2011 Update, paragraph 8

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ MSD, Statistical Report for the Year to June 2010 table CY.3 <http://statistical-report-2010.msd.govt.nz/child-percent2c+youth+and+family/care+and+protection+services/engagement+and+assessment+percent96+care+and+protection+services#tablecy1>

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid Table CY.12 <http://statistical-report-2010.msd.govt.nz/child-percent2c+youth+and+family/children+and+young+people+assisted/number-of+current+clients>

³⁴ <http://statistical-report-2010.msd.govt.nz/child-percent2c+youth+and+family/children+and+young+people+assisted/number-of+current+clients>

³⁵ <http://www.police.govt.nz/news/release/25629.html>

³⁶ http://www.areyouok.org.nz/files/news/Updated_Stats_Final.pdf

³⁷ MOJ, Child and Youth Offending Statistics 1992 to 2008 (new report due out early 2012)

What we will do

The Office's statutory role to monitor the policies and practices of Child, Youth and Family and services delivered under the CYPF Act has become more focused and effective over time. We are identifying opportunities for Child, Youth and Family to improve service delivery in rural and isolated communities; improve practice and supervision; have better functioning grievance panels in residences; and standards of training for social work undergraduates.

The Commissioner works on improved collaboration between the health sector and Child Youth, and Family, e.g. identification of children at risk in the antenatal period, the DHB Child Protection Alerts System, systems to support Child, Youth and Family social workers in hospitals and support for caregivers. These ad hoc projects will continue as opportunities arise.

In the next three years the Office's Monitoring Team will also:

- increase the number and quality of our monitoring visits to Child, Youth and Family sites and section 364³⁸ residences
- monitor that Child, Youth and Family reports on its progress on our recommendations and that the summary status reports on progress are received in a timely manner and demonstrate the progress we expect
- produce thematic reviews based on our experiences of several sites or residences
- establish processes to monitor Section 396 providers (those services providing social work and residential services on behalf of Child, Youth and Family).

Impact we want to make

Child, Youth and Family and other agencies working under the CYPF Act 1989 will have improved systems and practice for children experiencing abuse and neglect, for children in care and children and young people who have offended. Child protection and youth justice practice in other sectors (e.g., Health and Education) will improve and collaboration between Child, Youth and Family and these stakeholders will also improve.

What we want to achieve

Improved systems, practice and collaboration should lead in time to fewer children experiencing abuse and neglect, the needs of children in care and their caregivers being better understood and addressed and offending by children and young people being effectively responded to using models of best practise. In turn, this will lead to children feeling secure, experiencing successful placements with reduced rates of placement breakdown, having fewer unmet health needs, better success in education, stronger whanau reunification and reduced risk of reoffending.

³⁸ Residences are defined in Section 364 of the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 as being for the purpose of providing for the care and control of children and young people, and, in particular, establish a sufficient range of residences to cater effectively for the variety of special needs of such children and young persons.

Why us

We are the only independent agency with the responsibility to monitor the policies and practices of Child, Youth and Family and agencies that deliver services to children under the CYPF Act. The Children's Commissioner has a legislative mandate under the Children's Commissioner Act 2003 and the Crimes of Torture (Amendment) Act 2006 to undertake these responsibilities.

The Commissioner also has a leadership role in child protection within the health sector. We have experience in monitoring the work of Child, Youth and Family and, with a recent increase in capacity, we are now able to extend this monitoring. Our particular expertise in seeking children's voices adds credibility to the monitoring work.

Who we will work with

Our monitoring work involves meeting with staff from Child, Youth and Family offices, members of their Care and Protection Resource Panels (CPRP), Family and Youth Court judges and local lawyers who act as lawyers for Children and Youth Advocates, staff from section 364 residences and children in care. We also meet with local school principals and staff from Police and District Health Boards and local community agencies with specific focus on including Child, Youth and Family's Differential Response (DR) partners and iwi stakeholders. We also work with Child, Youth and Family National Office, Police National Headquarters and other stakeholders in Child, Youth and Family.

How this contributes to government priorities

Our work in this area supports the Government's goal to "reduce the number of assaults on children, reduce the rates of total crime, violent crime and youth crime, and to reduce reoffending". This work also contributes to the Ministry of Social Development's long-term outcome that "more children are safe".

How we will measure progress

Actual 2010/11	Measure	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Target 2014/15
	Impact measure				
New in 2012/13	The proportion of practice changes made by Child, Youth and Family that are consistent with the Office's recommendations.	New in 2012/13	100%	100%	100%
	Outcome indicator				
New in 2012/13	Lower rates of youth justice apprehensions	New in 2012/13	Decreasing	Decreasing	Decreasing
New in 2012/13	Lower substantiated rates of all forms of abuse and neglect	New in 2012/13	Decreasing	Decreasing	Decreasing

Underpinning strategies

Four strategies underpin the work in these priority areas and all work undertaken in the Office. These outputs contribute to all four outcome areas and give effect to the general functions of the Children's Commissioner outlined on page 13.

Outlined below is a description of each strategy. Following this we will discuss the impact measures used to assess the effectiveness of these strategies. Specific details of the outputs that link to these strategies are presented on page 37 of our Statement of Service Performance.

Promoting and increasing understanding of UNCROC

The Commissioner and the Office make a number of presentations promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). New Zealand ratified UNCROC in 1993. Its articles provide civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to all children and young people under 18. The Office provides advice to Parliament, Ministers, government agencies, and other organisations on progress towards its implementation. The Office has worked to establish a cross-sector strategy to bring together a number of agencies to better promote understanding of UNCROC in government agencies and in the general population.

Child-centred policy advice

The Office influences policy through submissions, providing expert advice, and bringing a child focus to central and local government policy processes.

We have a particular focus on the changes to local government in Auckland and the opportunities this presents for the interests of children and young people to be better met in the new arrangements. We have submitted to the Auckland Council and have met with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, council officials and others as we progress this aim.

As policy changes are considered over the next Parliamentary term, we will contribute our expertise and knowledge to such debates. Examples of these include:

- monitoring the Government's green/white paper process
- commenting on the welfare reform process
- reviewing the complaints processes within Child, Youth and Family.

Advocating for individuals

The Children's Commissioner is required by legislation to advocate for the best interests of children and young people. One particular way that the Office does this is through its Child Rights Line. The toll-free service receives about 1,000 contacts each year, mainly from parents or other adults concerned about individual children. Common issues raised are concerns about bullying at school, school suspensions and expulsions, access to housing, concerns about Child, Youth and Family services and immigration issues, such as the status of children whose parents are overstayers.

Callers are provided with information and advice. For some, the Office advocates on their behalf to remove barriers, achieve results and generate action. Calls also provide a valuable source of information that allow us to identify systemic issues

which we also work on to seek resolution and provides valuable data that contributes to our work across the Office's four priority areas.

How we will measure progress

The Children's Commissioner's statutory role is to advocate for the interests, rights and welfare of children. The underpinning strategies above outline the number of ways used by the Office to carry out this role. The manner of this advocacy has been defined, through the roles and functions of the Children's Commissioner, as raising awareness of issues that relate to the interests, rights and well-being of children in order to influence.

The key measure of success, therefore, is the impact we have on influencing people who care for children and young people, decision makers and service providers. We will measure our influence at an individual level and at a systemic level.

Impact

At an individual level – providing advice and information to influence individuals to ensure that the interests, rights and well-being of children are upheld.

Measure

Actual 2010/11	Impact measure	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Target 2014/15
New measure for 2012/13	The proportion of individuals surveyed, who call the child rights line, that act on the advice provided by the Office	New measure for 2012/13	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing

At a systemic level – informing and influencing policy and practice to ensure that the interests, rights and well-being of children are considered.

Measure

Actual 2010/11	Impact measure	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13	Target 2013/14	Target 2014/15
New measure for 2012/13	Descriptor: examples of policies or legislation changes recommended by OCC and included in legislation or policy this financial year	Descriptor	Descriptor	Descriptor	Descriptor

Organisational health and capability

Our people

To ensure that we can achieve our outcomes, impacts and outputs, we need a strong foundation of skilled people working together in a well-run organisation. Our objective is to ensure that the Office of the Children's Commissioner is respected as a credible, well-informed and considered advocate for children, and as an active monitor and accurate assessor of the quality of services provided to children under the CYPF Act.

To do this, we must be:

- **Honest brokers of the evidence:** we will continue to provide independent advice to government on matters affecting children that is evidence based, balanced and pragmatic
- **Clear about our values:** all our work will be solidly grounded in our values, UNCROC and Treaty of Waitangi principles
- **Courageous:** we will take the lead in debates on complex issues when we need to and ensure children's voices are heard
- **Collaborative:** we will work collaboratively with our stakeholders in government, the NGO sector, professional bodies and other organisations to ensure the best outcomes for children
- **Accountable:** we will continuously improve our performance by modelling best practice in public sector management and reporting our outcomes.

In order to become honest brokers of evidence, the Office requires a high level of knowledge and expertise of children's issues and the machinery of government. It needs skills in research, advocacy, communications and media work. Accordingly, in 2012-15 we will focus on:

- increasing mentoring/coaching and developing influencing skills – the Office will increase its focus in this area of staff development
- focusing on teamwork – all policy advice produced by the Office is expected to be multidisciplinary
- recruiting highly skilled staff who are experts in their own fields.

To attract the best people to the Office, we will ensure we have in place excellent human resource policies and practices. To this end:

- Our human resource policies are consistent with good employer obligations. We have policies in three key good employer areas: health and safety, recruitment and equal employment. Our policies and processes are up to date, reflect best practice, and are regularly reviewed and communicated to staff.
- Our Office is a member of the Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Trust.
- We will set pay and employment conditions that are realistic and consistent with the Government's expectations for pay and employment conditions in the State Sector.

- The Office is committed to employment equity in all employment practices. The Office's aim is to maintain and enhance practices which eliminate all forms of discrimination in employment matters and that ensure the organisation meets "good employer" and "equal employment opportunity" requirements. Staff are supported through flexible working arrangements and access to training and development. A culture is encouraged where staff enjoy a work-life balance, they are valued and feel that they are making a contribution to the outcomes the Office seeks to achieve.

Effective governance

Our objective is to ensure that our systems support and develop staff, and there is financial sustainability and accountability.

Financial sustainability is a critical part of our strategy. We expect funding for the Children's Commissioner to remain static over the next four years. The Office will continue to assess how its services can be delivered most efficiently and effectively while ensuring that:

- we have good strategic and business planning
- our legal obligations are met
- we maintain a capable organisation with skilled staff, reliable systems and process, and strong relationships with our stakeholders
- the service standards and cost drivers of the business are understood and managed well
- realistic budgets are established
- pay and employment conditions are fair and realistic.

In 2009, the Office relocated into space leased by the Families Commission. The relocation resulted in approximately \$143,000 savings across both organisations in 2009/10 and approximately \$183,000 in 2010/11, through the sharing of rent and administrative resources.

In 2011 the Office moved their information systems onto the Ministry of Social Development's information technology platform. This move has provided an opportunity for the Office to allow staff to work remotely, enhance its information databases, increase the level of support, enhance business continuity arrangements as well as maximising the effectiveness of the Office's expenditure on information system provision.

The Office is committed to sound recordkeeping practices to underpin good corporate governance. The Office developed an information management strategy in 2010/11 to assist the Office's objective to ensure compliance with the Public Records Act 2005.

In 2012/13 we will:

- review and update corporate policies and procedures to ensure that these reflect best practice

- continue to implement recommendations from the Office's Information Management Strategy
- continue to work with the Families Commission to identify efficiencies that can be gained from shared accommodation and greater coordination of operational activities
- improve existing systems to measure and report on the uptake of our advocacy advice. This will take time to develop but is essential.

Our communications

Effective and strategic communication is vital to the work of the Office. Communication, in its various forms and channels, ensures children's interests remain high on the agenda and ultimately contributes to the outcomes of the Office.

In 2012 the Office will be reviewing its communications strategy to align it with the Outcomes framework and to reflect the new direction under the new Commissioner.

The Office has a good relationship with the media. It seeks opportunities for the Commissioner to comment on issues relevant to the work of the Office and proactively engages with the media on specific projects. The media regularly seek the position of the Commissioner on a wide variety of topics related to children. This is seen as an opportunity to advocate for the interests of children and raise the quality of debate within the public sphere.

Raising the quality of media reporting on children and young people's issues and encouraging media to include the voices of young people is also a communications objective of the Office. In 2012 the Office undertook training sessions with Fairfax reporters, and is planning on expanding this to APN and broadcast media in 2012/13.

In 2011 the Office ventured into social media, setting up a Facebook page and starting a blog on the Green Paper. Both these channels will be considered for expansion in 2012/13.

The Office is undertaking a review of its website in 2012 to ensure the site is meeting the needs of those visiting. This will possibly lead to redevelopment of the website in 2012/13.

Each quarter the Office produces the publication *Children*. This publication is distributed to approximately 4000 individuals and organisations around the country. Anecdotally, the feedback on the quality and value of *Children* is high. The content of the publication is regularly cited by other publications and used by media. As the content of *Children* has increased, we have decided to reduce publication from four to three editions in 2012/13.

Children will be reviewed in 2012 to ensure it is meeting its objectives and reaching the right audiences.

The Office has developed resources to promote children's rights which we print and distribute to individuals, government and non-government agencies and community groups. This material, much of it concerned with parenting, is in great demand.

In 2012/13 the Office will:

- develop a communications plan

- review the publication and dissemination of the journal *Children*
- review the Office's website and consider implementing recommendations from that review.

Our relationships

To encourage collaboration, our objective is to develop and enhance key relationships and partnerships in order to extend our networks and expand our influence with decision-makers.

The Office maintains good relationships with the education, advocacy, youth, health and social services sectors through the networks of individual staff members. While this is valuable and will continue, a more strategic approach to stakeholder engagement will be developed in 2012/13.

We will achieve this by developing and implementing a stakeholder plan.

We have also reduced the number of focus areas for the Office to four. This will allow for more time to devote to stronger networks and relationships and to the quality of our outputs.

Our commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi is central to the work of the Office and honouring the Treaty is one of the core values that drive our work.

We will work to embed the Office's newly developed tikanga framework (page 10) across all areas of the Office, by supporting staff to apply these concepts in their projects and mahi.

Measures and standards for organisational health and capability

We have established measures and standards, outlined in the table below. These are new measures and standards for this Statement of Intent and therefore will be establishing baseline data to assess organisational health and capability for the organisation across the period of this Statement of Intent.

Indicator	Measure	Target 2012/13
Performance management processes are embedded and linked to the deliverables expected of the Office	100% of all staff performance development reviews completed within two months of start of financial year	New measure for 2012/13
The Office maintains good systems and controls	External auditors issue an unmodified audit opinion for annual audit of the Office's systems and controls	New measure for 2012/13

Risks

The major risks to which we are exposed and our responses to these are:

Risk type	In response, our office will
<i>Credibility:</i> The risk that the Office loses the confidence of key stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the quality of its investigation and reporting capability, and of its advice and advocacy. • Ensure statutory obligations are met, as well as advocacy and advisory responsibilities. • Ensure that its position and advice on issues is evidence based – through the use of reliable information and robust research.
<i>Representation:</i> The risk that the Office does not remain the authoritative advocate of the interests, needs and rights of children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and develop the input it receives from children – particularly the Young People’s Reference Group. • Keep informed of national and international good practice and emerging issues.
<i>Results focus:</i> The risk that the Office could lose focus on its key outcomes and results and on business priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain results-focused planning systems within the office. • Manage external pressures and demands on the work agenda of the office. • Manage and monitor a sustainable, office-wide work plan and individual work plans. • Achieve a workable balance between the main lines of business: investigations, monitoring, advocacy and advisory.
<i>Staff skills:</i> The risk that key skill capabilities are not available for the Commissioner’s work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan recruitment and retention to ensure that the required skills are developed and maintained. • Ensure induction programmes are supported with development and performance management systems. • Ensure adequate funding (for salaries and to meet good employer obligations) to attract and retain quality staff.

Other business risks, such as maintaining business continuity in the case of emergencies, are dealt with through specific plans.

Managing fraud

The Office has a zero tolerance approach toward internal fraud and the inappropriate misuse of information which is supported by a formal policy. This policy is reviewed annually and communicated to staff. We also maintain an interests register for the Commissioner and staff to declare any conflicts of interest. The Management team reviews this register regularly.

Consultation and reporting to the responsible Minister

Reporting to the responsible Minister

The Children's Commissioner has agreed to establish and sign an Output Agreement with the responsible Minister, setting out details on the way in which the Commissioner will continue to consult and report on the Government's purchase interests in the office.

Reporting will include:

- regular meetings with the responsible Minister and briefings on issues relating to the interests, rights and welfare of children
- quarterly reports on output delivery, key developments in the reporting period and financial reports.

The Commissioner will continue to work with the Minister on a "no-surprises" basis and raise issues at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting for formal reporting to be done. We will continue to brief the Minister on significant publications, speeches and releases.

Annual reporting

The Commissioner is required by the Crown Entities Act 2004 (Section 150) to provide the responsible Minister with an Annual Report on operations for each year. This report is separate from the quarterly reports already mentioned above and will provide information about the financial performance of the Office and our performance against the key deliverables agreed with the Minister.

Reporting will focus on:

- delivery of outputs – a detailed year-to-date report against progress and commitments, as detailed in the Output Agreement.
- financial statements – a comprehensive set of year-to-date reports and (where required) commentary against the forecast financial reports specified in the Output Agreement, and informative and accurate non-financial information.

Longer-term financial targets

The Commissioner looks to maintain Working Capital (Current Assets – Current Liabilities) at a base level of approximately \$250,000. This equates to approximately one month's operational activity.

PART 3: STATEMENT OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Prospective statement of service performance and financial information

Statement of Responsibility

The Children's Commissioner is an Independent Crown Entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004 with its role established under the Children's Commissioner Act 2003 to advocate for the interests, rights and welfare of children generally.

The Commissioner and his Office are responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Intent and prospective financial statements, including the assumptions on which the financial statements are based.

The prospective financial statements have been prepared in accordance with NZ IFRS. The Children's Commissioner does not intend to update and republish the prospective financial statements.

The prospective financial statements have been developed for the purpose of presenting the Commissioner's intentions in Parliament, and should not be relied upon by any other party for any alternative purpose without the express written permission of the Commissioner. Actual results are likely to be different from the prospective financial statements and the variation may be material.

The Commissioner reviews the first half-year result and third quarter result in April of each year and restates the estimated out-turn for the current fiscal year.

I have authorised the issue of the financial statements on this day, 25 May 2012.



Dr Russell Wills
Children's Commissioner

Statement of service performance

The statement of service performance sets out the key activities and services the Commissioner will undertake in the 2012/13 year period, with associated performance measures, to achieve its outcomes. This includes defining the activity, how it contributes towards the outcomes, the cost to deliver that work and the performance measures and standards required to ensure effective, timely and high-quality outputs. It is important to provide a clear link between the annual activities of the Children's Commissioner and the achievement of its longer-term goals.

The Commissioner's outputs are determined by its statutory functions. The Commissioner categorises these as:

- monitoring and investigating
- individual and systemic advocacy

The performance measures in this section relate to the outputs for 2012/13, which in turn contribute to the longer-term impacts described in the outcome areas of part two, as illustrated in the table on page 16.

The Office's activities are primarily funded by the Crown through Vote Social Development, Non-departmental Expense, Children's Commissioner, with minor funding from interest earned from investments and the sale of resources.

The output agreement for 2012/12 with the responsible Minister sets out the work programme designed to achieve our 2012/13 objectives. It also details performance measures relevant to specific initiatives.

We adhere to the following quality principles for all outputs the Office produces:

- timeliness: all reporting deadlines are met or alternative arrangements made
- consultation and participation: potential affected parties and interested parties are consulted and their views considered
- presentation: documents adhere to internal guidelines and are presented clearly, logically and in plain, grammatically correct language
- practicality: viable options are presented and assessed practicalities are identified and solutions proposed, when appropriate
- internal standards: responsiveness, accessibility and professional behaviour are adhered to.

Summary of resources 2012/13

Output	Revenue	Expense	Surplus/(deficit)
Individual and Systemic Advocacy	\$1,472,464	\$1,758,254	(\$285,790)
Monitoring and investigating	\$725,536	\$786,490	(\$60,954)
Total	\$2,198,000	\$2,300,728	(\$346,744)

Output: Individual and Systemic Advocacy

Description

The Commissioner is required to advocate for the best interests of children and young people. Through this output the Commissioner will deliver an advocacy work programme that will contribute to all four outcome areas, *Child Health, Children growing up in poverty, Education and Abuse and Neglect*. Each area requires a different approach which is outlined in the output tables below. In addition to these priority areas, the Commissioner has four strategies underpinning the work in these priority areas: *Promoting and raising awareness of UNCROC, Capturing children's voices, Influencing decision makers and Advocating for individual children*. This work is included in the output tables below.

Scope

The scope of the work programme during 2012/13 will be a comprehensive advocacy programme design to deliver impacts in each of our four priority outcome areas as well as the underpinning strategies which support the work across the office.

Performance measures and standards

Quantity and timeliness

Measure	Actual 2010/11	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13
District Health Board scorecard report is published by 30 June 2013	New measure for 2012/13	New measure for 2012/13	Standard met
Child Poverty interim report is published by 31 August 2012	New measure for 2012/13	New measure for 2012/13	Standard met
Child Poverty final report is published by 31 December 2012	New measure for 2012/13	New measure for 2012/13	Standard met
Research report on participation in ECE is published by 30 June 2013	New measure for 2012/13	New measure for 2012/13	Standard met
Number of ECE Advocacy presentations delivered to national conferences, regional events and local groups will be no fewer than	New measure for 2012/13	New measure for 2012/13	8
Number of Child-focused policy advice or submissions to select committees, government departments and Ministers delivered will be no fewer than	14	10	10 ³⁹
Number of editions of <i>Children</i> journal published by 30 June 2013 will be no fewer than	4	3	3 ⁴⁰

³⁹ The number of advice/submissions delivered has been kept at 10 to allow focus on our four key priorities

⁴⁰ The number of journals published has been reduced from four to three to increase the depth and coverage of issues in each publication.

Measure	Actual 2010/11	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13
Number of Young People's Reference Group meetings convened will be no fewer than	4	4	4

Quantity

Measure	Actual 2010/11	Estimate 2011/12	Target 2012/13
Number of calls responded to via the Child Rights Line will be between	1064	900 – 1,000	900 – 1,100

Quality

Measure	Actual 2010/11	Estimate 2011/12	Target 2012/13
Proportion of Child Rights Line cases that are independently peer reviewed by a Principal Advisor or Manager will be no less than	New measure for 2012/13	New measure for 2012/13	100%
Proportion of speaking event organisers with a level of satisfaction that the information provided and delivery of speech or presentation were of benefit to them and their audience will be no less than	90%	75%	90%
Proportion of participants with a level of satisfaction that the workshops and training material provided through advocacy training workshops were of benefit to them will be no less than	97%	75%	95%
Proportion of all published reports that are formally peer reviewed by at least one external expert and comments incorporated in the final report where appropriate, will be no less than	Not applicable ⁴¹	100%	100%

Resources⁴² (GST exclusive)

Revenue	\$1,472,464
Expenses	\$1,758,254
Net surplus	(\$285,790)

⁴¹ No reports were published externally during 2010/2011

⁴² All figures are GST exclusive. Indicative application of costs only.

Output: Monitoring and investigating

Description

Through this output the Children's Commissioner monitors and assesses the policies and practices of Child, Youth and Family and other agencies providing services under the CYPF Act. Under this output the Commissioner also acts as a National Preventive Mechanism with specific responsibility for monitoring and assessing the safety and treatment of children in nine Child, Youth and Family residences. This output contributes to the outcome *Abuse and neglect* – by generating evidence of the quality of services delivered by Child, Youth and Family and other agencies.

Scope

The scope of the work programme during 2012/13 includes a monitoring plan agreed with Child, Youth and Family.

Performance measures and standards

Quantity

Measure	Actual 2010/11	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13
Number of thematic reviews undertaken will be no fewer than	New in 2012/13	New in 2012/13	1
Number of Child, Youth and Family site visits undertaken will be no fewer than ⁴³	9	6	10
Number of performance reports on Child, Youth and Family sites completed and delivered to the Deputy Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development responsible for Child, Youth and Family will be no fewer than ⁴⁴	7	6	10
Number of Child, Youth and Family residence visits/inspections undertaken will be no fewer than ⁴⁵	10	9	9
Number of performance reports on Child, Youth and Family residences completed and delivered to the Deputy Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development responsible for Child, Youth and Family will be no fewer than ⁴⁶	9	9	9
Number of S396 provider visits completed will be no fewer than	New in 2012/13	New in 2012/13	1

⁴³ This measure is included in the 2012/2013 Information Supporting the Estimates

⁴⁴ This measure is included in the 2012/2013 Information Supporting the Estimates

⁴⁵ This measure is included in the 2012/2013 Information Supporting the Estimates

⁴⁶ This measure is included in the 2012/2013 Information Supporting the Estimates

Measure	Actual 2010/11	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13
Summary compliance report is drafted for inclusion in the Human Rights Commission's Annual Report	1	1	Standard met

Timeliness

Measure	Actual 2010/11	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13
Proportion of timeframes for visits in line with the monitoring framework and schedule of visits agreed with Child, Youth and Family will be no less than	100%	100%	100%
Summary compliance report drafted for inclusion in the Human Rights Commission's Annual Report by 30 June 2013	by 30 June 2011	by 30 June 2012	Standard met

Quality

Measure	Actual 2010/11	Estimated 2011/12	Target 2012/13
The Office complies with agreed standards and processes established by the monitoring framework between the Office and Child, Youth and Family, reported against in the site and residence reports	100%	100%	Standard met
Proportion of monitoring reports that are peer reviewed by the General Manager will be no less than	New measure for 2012/13	New measure for 2012/13	100%

Resources⁴⁷ (GST exclusive)

Revenue	\$725,536
Expenses	\$786,490
Net surplus	(\$60,954)

⁴⁷ All figures are GST exclusive. Indicative application of costs only.

Financial Statements

Prospective statement of comprehensive income

	Estimated out turn 2011/12 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2012/13 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2013/14 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2014/15 (\$000)
Revenue Crown	2,157	2,157	2,157	2,157
Revenue Other	3	1	1	1
Interest	40	40	40	40
Total Revenue	2,200	2,198	2,198	2,198
Personnel	1,327	1,649	1,490	1,535
Operating	580	617	535	535
Other	31	8	10	10
Projects	150	256	140	145
Depreciation	16	15	15	15
Total Expenditure	2,104	2,545	2,190	2,240
Net	96	(347)	8	(42)

Prospective statement of comprehensive financial position

	Estimated out turn 2011/12 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2012/13 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2013/14 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2014/15 (\$000)
Current Assets	1,089	745	753	711
Current Liabilities	217	220	220	220
Net Working Capital	872	525	533	491
Fixed Assets	20	20	20	20
Net Assets	892	545	553	511
Taxpayers Funds	892	545	553	511

Prospective statement of movement in equity

	Estimated out turn 2011/12 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2012/13 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2013/14 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2014/15 (\$000)
Taxpayers' equity brought forward (as at 1 July)	796	892	545	553
Net operating surplus/(deficit)	96	(347)	8	(42)
Total recognised revenues and expenses for the year	96	(347)	8	(42)
Taxpayers' equity as at 30 June	892	545	553	511

Prospective statement of cash flows

	Estimated out turn 2011/12 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2012/13 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2013/14 (\$000)	Estimated out turn 2014/15 (\$000)
<i>Cash flows from operating activities</i>				
Cash will be provided from:				
Government grant & other sources	2,157	2,157	2,157	2,157
Revenue from services	1	1	1	1
Interest received	40	40	40	40
Cash will be applied to:				
Payments to Commissioner & employees	(1,327)	(1,649)	(1,490)	1,535
Payments to suppliers	(761)	(881)	(685)	690
<i>Net cash flows from operating activities</i>	110	(332)	23	(27)
<i>Cash flows from investing activities</i>				
Sale of fixed assets	2	0	0	0
Purchase of fixed assets	0	0	0	0
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	112	(332)	23	(28)
Plus opening cash balance	460	572	240	263
Closing cash balance	572	240	263	236

Statement of accounting policies

Reporting entity

The Children's Commissioner is a Crown Entity as defined by the Crown Entities Act 2004 and is domiciled in New Zealand. As such, the Commissioner's ultimate parent is the New Zealand Crown.

The Children's Commissioner was first established on 1 November 1989 under the Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989, but his functions were then mandated by the Children's Commissioner Act 2003. Its primary objective is to ensure that the interests and rights of every child and young person are recognised and each enjoys safety, good health and education, economic and sociocultural well-being and opportunities to actively participate in matters that affect them.

Accordingly the Children's Commissioner has designated itself as a public benefit entity for the purposes of New Zealand Equivalents to the International Reporting Standards (NZIFRS).

The financial statements included in the Statement of Intent, report on the expected out turn of the Children's Commissioner for the year ended 30 June 2012 and the activities planned for the year ended 30 June 2013.

Statement of compliance and basis of preparation

The financial statements of the Children's Commissioner have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Crown Entities Act 2004, which includes the requirement to comply with New Zealand Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (NZ GAAP). The financial statements comply with the Framework for Differential Reporting for Public Benefit Entities adopting the NZ equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (NZ IFRS) and its interpretations as appropriate to public benefit entities that qualify for and apply differential reporting concessions.

The Children's Commissioner qualifies for Differential Reporting exemptions as it meets the criteria set out in the Framework for Differential Reporting.

Differential reporting exemptions as available under the Framework for Differential Reporting have been applied where applicable and have been consistently applied to all periods presented in these financial statements.

Measurement base

The financial statements have been prepared on a historical cost basis, except for the measurement of derivative financial instruments which is at fair value.

Functional and presentation currency

The financial statements are presented in New Zealand dollars and all values rounded to the nearest thousand dollars (\$000). The functional currency of the Children's Commissioner is New Zealand dollars.

Going concern

The going concern concept is assumed when preparing these financial statements.

Revenue

Revenue is measured at the fair value of consideration received or receivable.

The Children's Commissioner is primarily funded by the Crown for the purposes and objectives set out in the Statement of Intent.

Revenue for services (Crown and other parties) is recognised when it is earned and is reported in the statement of comprehensive income in the period to which it relates.

Interest

Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method.

Operating leases

Leases that do not transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an asset to the Children's Commissioner are classified as "operating leases". Lease payments under an operating lease are expensed as incurred in the Statement of Financial Performance. The Children's Commissioner leases Office premises and photocopiers only.

Finance leases

The Children's Commissioner does not enter into finance leases.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with domestic banks, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

Debtors and other receivables

Debtors and other receivables are initially measured at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any provision for impairment.

Bank deposits

Investments in bank deposits are initially measured at fair value plus transaction costs. After initial recognition, investments in bank deposits are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment asset classes consist of furniture, office equipment, motor vehicles and computer equipment. Property, plant and equipment are shown at cost or valuation, less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Additions

The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment is recognised as an asset only when it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Children's Commissioner and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Individual assets or groups of assets are capitalised if their costs are greater than \$1,000 (excluding GST).

Disposals

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount of the asset. Gains and losses on disposals are included in the statement of comprehensive income.

Subsequent costs

Costs incurred subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised only when it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Children's Commissioner and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. The costs of day-to-day servicing of property, plant and equipment are recognised in the statement of financial performance as they are incurred.

Depreciation

Depreciation is charged on a straight-line basis so as to write off the cost of the fixed assets over their expected economic lives. The depreciation rates of major classes of assets used in the preparation of these statements are:

Office furniture and equipment	5 years	20%
Computer equipment	3 – 5 years	20 – 33%

The residual value and useful life of an asset is reviewed and adjusted if applicable at each financial year end.

Intangible assets

Software acquisition and development

Acquired computer software licenses are capitalised on the basis of the costs incurred to acquire and bring to use the specific software.

Costs that are directly associated with the development of software for internal use by the Children's Commissioner are recognised as an intangible asset. Direct costs include the software development, employee costs and an appropriate portion of relevant overheads. Staff training costs are recognised as an expense when incurred. Costs associated with maintaining computer software are recognised as an expense when incurred.

Costs associated with the maintenance of the Children's Commissioner web-site are recognised as an expense when incurred.

Amortisation

The carrying value of an intangible asset with a finite life is amortised on a straight-line basis over its useful life. Amortisation begins when the asset is available for use and ceases at the date that the asset is de-recognised. The amortisation charge for each period is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income. The useful lives and associated amortisation rates of major classes of intangible assets have been estimated as follows:

- acquired computer software: 5 years, 20%

Impairment of non-financial assets

Property, plant and equipment and intangible assets that have a finite useful life are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use.

Creditors and other payables

Creditors and other payables are initially measured at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Employee entitlements

Short-term employee entitlements

Employee entitlements that the Children's Commissioner expects to be settled within 12 months of balance date are measured at undiscounted nominal values based on accrued entitlements at current rates of pay. These include salaries and wages accrued up to balance date, annual leave and long-service leave earned, but not yet taken at balance date. Long-Service leave is calculated using Treasury actuarial guidelines.

Defined contribution schemes

Obligations for contributions to Kiwisaver, less the Crown employer subsidy, and the State Sector Retirement Savings Scheme are accounted for as defined contribution superannuation schemes and are recognised as an expense in the Statement of Financial Performance as incurred.

Provisions

The Children's Commissioner recognises a provision for future expenditure of uncertain amount or timing when there is a present obligation (either legal or constructive) as a result of a past event and it is probable that expenditures will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are measured at the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation using a pre-tax discount rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the obligation. The increase in the provision due to the passage of time is recognised as a finance cost.

Goods and services tax (GST)

All items in the financial statements are presented exclusive of GST, except for receivables and payables, which are presented on a GST inclusive basis. Where GST is not recoverable as input tax then it is recognised as part of the related asset or expense. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) is included as part of receivables or payables in the statement of financial position. The net GST paid to, or received from the IRD, including the GST relating to investing and financing activities, is classified as an operating cash flow in the Statement of Cash Flows.

Children's Commissioner commitments and contingencies are disclosed exclusive of GST.

Income tax

The Children's Commissioner is a public authority and consequently is exempt from the payment of income tax. Accordingly, no charge for income tax has been provided for.

Budget figures

The budget figures are derived from the Statement of Intent as approved by the Children's Commissioner at the beginning of the financial year. The budget figures have been prepared in accordance with NZ IFRS, using accounting policies that are consistent with those adopted by the Children's Commissioner for the preparation of the financial statements.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

In preparing these financial statements the Children's Commissioner has made estimates and assumptions concerning the future. These estimates and assumptions may differ from the subsequent actual results. Estimates and assumptions are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. There are no known significant risks within these estimates and assumptions that would cause a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

Statement of cash flows

"Cash" means cash on hand, deposits held at call with domestic banks, other short-term, highly liquid investments with maturities of three months or less and bank overdrafts.

"Operating activities" include cash received from all income sources of the Children's Commissioner and cash payments made for the supply of goods and services.

"Investing activities" are those activities relating to the acquisition and disposal of non-current assets.

Changes in accounting Policies

All policies will continue to be applied on a basis consistent with other years.

Statement of significant assumptions

Crown Revenue is \$2,157,000. It is assumed Crown revenue will remain at this level over the next 3-5 years.

APPENDICES

Appendix one – Statutory functions

Under section 12 of the Children's Commissioner Act 2003, the Commissioner's general functions are:

(a) to investigate any decision or recommendation made, or any act done or omitted (other than a decision, recommendation, or act to which section 13(1)(a) applies), in respect of any child in that child's personal capacity:

(b) to promote the establishment of accessible and effective complaints mechanisms for children and to monitor the nature and level of complaints:

(c) to raise awareness and understanding of children's interests, rights, and welfare:

(d) to raise awareness and understanding of the Convention:

(e) to undertake and promote research into any matter that relates to the welfare of children:

(f) to act as an advocate for children's interests, rights, and welfare generally (except before any court or tribunal), and, in that regard, to advance and monitor the application of the Convention by departments of State and other instruments of the Crown:

(g) if there are issues in proceedings before any court or tribunal that relate to the Convention or to the interests, rights, or welfare of children generally, to present reports on such issues to the court or tribunal, at the request of—

(i) the court or tribunal; or

(ii) counsel representing any party to the proceedings; or

(iii) counsel representing any child who is the subject of the proceedings; or

(iv) counsel assisting the court or tribunal:

(h) to receive and invite representations from members of the public on any matter that relates to the welfare of children:

(i) to increase public awareness of matters that relate to the welfare of children:

(j) to promote, in relation to decisions that affect the lives of children,—

(i) the participation of children in those decisions; and

(ii) an approach to children's views that, in each case, gives due weight to those views in accordance with the age and maturity of the relevant child:

(k) to report, with or without request, to the Prime Minister on matters affecting the rights of children:

(l) to inquire generally into, and report on, any matter, including any enactment or law, or any practice or procedure, that relates to the welfare of children.

Under section 13 of the Children's Commissioner Act 2003, the Commissioner has specific functions in relation to Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989:

(a) to investigate any decision or recommendation made, or any act done or omitted, under that Act in respect of any child or young person in that child's or young person's personal capacity:

(b) to monitor and assess—

(i) the policies and practices of the department; and

(ii) the policies and practices of any other person, body, or organisation that relate to the performance or exercise by the person, body, or organisation of a function, duty, or power under that Act or regulations made under that Act:

(c) to encourage the development, within the department, of policies and services that are designed to promote the welfare of children and young persons:

(d) on the Commissioner's own initiative or at the request of the Minister, to advise the Minister on any matter that relates to the administration of that Act or regulations made under that Act:

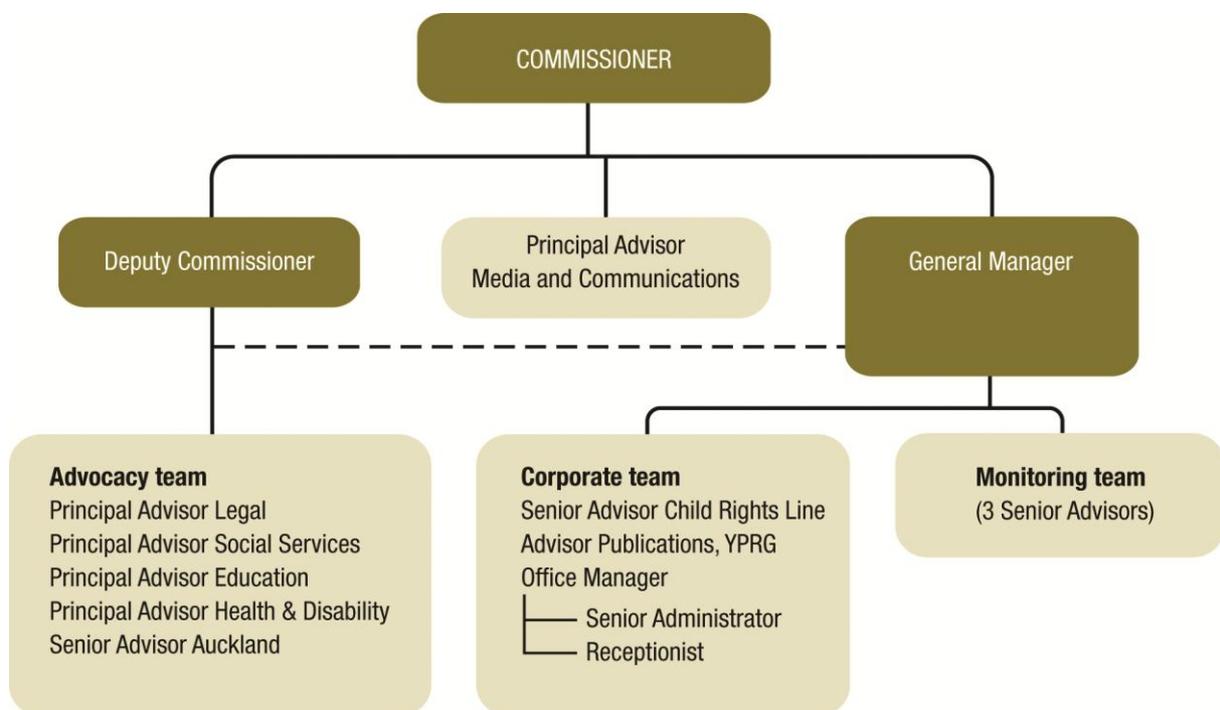
(e) to keep under review, and make recommendations on, the working of that Act.

Appendix two – Organisational structure

Dr Russell Wills was appointed by the Governor-General as the Children’s Commissioner from 1 July 2011 for a five year period. Dr Wills is the first half-time Children’s Commissioner and works half time in clinical paediatrics at Hawke’s Bay Hospital.

As at 30 June 2012, the Office employs 14.6 full time equivalents. 12.6 FTEs are based in the Wellington office and 2 FTEs work in Auckland.

The Children’s Commissioner is supported by a Deputy Commissioner who deputises in the absence of the Commissioner and manages the Advocacy Team. The General Manager manages the Monitoring and Corporate Teams. Two staff are based in Auckland to facilitate our advocacy work and key stakeholder relationships there.



Appendix three – Glossary

CPRP	Care and Protection Resource Panel
CYPF Act	Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989
DHB	District Health Board
DR	Differential Response
EAG	Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunities
FTE	full time equivalent
HQSC	Health Quality and Safety Commission
NPM	National Preventive Mechanism
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPCAT	The Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
PSNZ	Paediatric Society of New Zealand
SOI	Statement of Intent
SUDI	Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy
YPRG	Young People’s Reference Group
UNCROC	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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