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Connecting communities

Family and Community Services helps families and communities to be strong, well-informed and connected with each other.

We do this by:

- Strengthening the support services environment to deliver more effective responses to families in need
- Making it easier for families to access information and connect with the right services in their communities
- Encouraging communities to work together to identify social issue needs, and to take action to address those needs

Family and Community Services reaches families and communities across New Zealand through three collaborative initiatives:

- Heartland Services
- Local Services Mapping
- Strengthening Families

Each initiative supports government agencies and community organisations in working together to improve outcomes for families and the communities in which they live. These initiatives recognise that families are better able to help themselves when they are connected with their communities.

Family and Community Services

Family and Community Services is the part of the Ministry of Social Development that focuses on the delivery of preventive and early intervention services for families and whānau and strengthening the community sector that supports them.

We work for strong families and connected communities through:

- Raising awareness, dialogue and action on issues central to strong families
- Investing in family strengths and community capacity
- Identifying and supporting families with needs
- Strengthening support services to deliver more effective responses to family needs

Family and Community Services works at the national and regional level.



Heartland Services

Heartland Services is an across government initiative to improve access to government and community services for people living in provincial and rural New Zealand.

Most of our 35 Heartland Services Centres are located in rural and non-urban settings (three are in urban communities). These centres provide a convenient meeting place for local people to discuss their needs directly with government agencies and community organisations. Some of the centres also support local voluntary groups by providing them with access to a variety of government and community resources.

Heartland Services also provides an Outreach Service for more isolated areas. Once or twice a month, representatives from government agencies synchronise visits to provide a level of personal service that is generally only available in urban areas.

Our Heartland Service Centres are convenient 'one-stop' shops that allow people to:

- Discuss their service needs with a Heartland Services Co-ordinator
- Make appointments with representatives from a number of government agencies
- Access government websites
- Access toll-free government phone lines

Heartland Services Centres can be found in: Kaitaia, Kaikohe, Dargaville, Whangarei, Waiheke Island, Pukekohe, Coromandel, Murupara, Opotiki, Kawerau, Ruatoria, Taupo, Turangi, Wairoa, Hawera, Taumarunui, Taihape, Waipukurau, Tararua, Takaka, Kaikoura, Hokitika, Westport, Aranui, Hornby, Akaroa, Chatham Islands, Waimate, Farlie, Twizel, Oamaru, Queenstown, Te Anau, Gore, and Balclutha.



Local Services Mapping

Local Services Mapping (LSM) provides communities with the means to voice their aspirations and priorities, and it helps families identify and receive the social services they need.

The LSM process is a collaborative partnership involving government agencies, local government, iwi and community-based agencies. This partnership identifies local social priorities and works to improve the existing local services network to address those priorities.

Each LSM process is shaped by its community's unique opportunities, with an emphasis on identifying local service solutions that work for that community.

The LSM process is captured in a community report that identifies social priorities, as well as the effectiveness of local social services.

As of March 2007, community reports have been completed for: Dunedin, Gore, Hauraki, Kaikoura, Kapiti Coast, Kawerau, Murupara, Northcote, Papakura, Queenstown Lakes, Rotorua, Tararua, Tauranga, Waimakariri, and Waitakere.

Implementation and Monitoring

This ensures that actions identified in the community action plan are implemented and achieve the desired results

Developing the Community Report

Based on local research, each community report provides a snapshot of the community, reviews existing social services, identifies local needs and opportunities, and highlights areas for action

The Local Services Mapping Process



Action Planning

Each community action plan focuses on the key areas identified in the community report and helps provider and funder organisations to improve both separately and collectively with other partners, the quality and effectiveness of services delivered to families

Strengthening Families

STRENGTHENING *families*

Strengthening Families coordinates support for families/whānau dealing with more than two government or non-government agencies to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people.

This approach ensures that families receive an improved level of service - social service providers are not duplicating efforts, and family members are able to meet at the same time with everyone who is working with their child.

Strengthening Families is a community-based initiative that is tailored to local needs and circumstances. Within each area, the programme is overseen by a Local Management Group that includes representatives from health, education, welfare, justice and other relevant agencies.

The key objectives of Strengthening Families are to:

- Make it easier for vulnerable families to access Strengthening Families
- Increase the capacity of families to work together and with agencies to solve problems
- Increase the capacity of agencies to work collaboratively

Strengthening Families operates in over 55 communities throughout New Zealand.

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