

Child Protection Policy

REQUIREMENTS FOR COURT APPOINTED COUNSELLORS

Protecting New Zealand's children is everyone's responsibility.

The Ministry of Justice is part of a cross-agency effort to prevent child abuse and neglect. We are involved in and committed to various measures being put in place under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and the Children's Action Plan which aim to keep children safe and ensure their needs are met.

Vulnerable Children Act 2014

The Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (The Act) made changes to protect vulnerable children and help them thrive, achieve and belong. The purpose of the Act was to also ensure that children's agencies work together to improve the well-being of vulnerable children.

The legislation introduced the requirement for:

- A vulnerable children's plan
- Safety checking and the workforce restriction
- Child protection policies

The new measures are being phased in over several years and in some cases, these initiatives bring in new requirements for various agencies, organisations and roles.

The Ministry of Justice has specific implementation obligations under the Act.

As an agency responsible for the delivery of "prescribed state services", the Ministry must have child protection policies (CPP) in place that contain provisions for the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

The Ministry must also ensure that "every contract or funding arrangement" it has with organisations or individuals has these in place if they are providers of children's services.

Children's Services

Children's services are defined as:

- services provided to children, or
- services provided to adults in respect of children.

While there is no provision in the Family Court to provide counselling services directly to children, under section 46G Care of Children Act 2004 (adult) parties may be directed to counselling with an approved Family Court counsellor. Counselling referrals are therefore considered as "services provided to adults in respect of children" and Family Court counsellors are now required to have a Child Protection Policy in place.

Child Protection Policies

Child protection policies are documents describing the processes and procedures that an organisation or individual uses to identify and report child abuse and neglect.

What child protection policies contain

They must be:

- written
- contain provisions on the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect
- apply to the children's services that the organisation or individual provides.

If you don't already have a Child Protection Policy

The Children's Action Plan Directorate has provided guidelines and model policy templates which are available at:

www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/childrens-workforce/child-protection-policies/

Child Matters also offer a range of policy advisory services to assist with the development of policies:

<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/225/child-protection-policy>

Other resources

Guidance about reporting concerns:

<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/keeping-kids-safe/if-you-are-worried/index.html>

Guidance on identifying abuse /neglect:

<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/keeping-kids-safe/if-you-are-worried/looking-out-for-at-risk-children-and-families.html>

<http://www.childmatters.org.nz/24/learn-about-child-abuse>.