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ACTION
GROUP



A Review of Law and Policy of Child Poverty Reduction from 2018 to 2022

*Dr Dana Wensley
March 2023*

Our mission

Founded in 1994, the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) is an independent, registered charity working to eliminate child poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand through research, education and advocacy.

Our work

CPAG produces research about the causes and effects of poverty on children and their whānau and families, and uses this to inform public discussion and promote evidence-based responses.

CPAG is funded entirely by grants from charitable trusts and donations from the public. Our members across New Zealand include leading academics, doctors, teachers, health workers, community workers and many others.

Our work covers issues such as health, housing, education, taxation, disability, employment and income support.

Our focus on children

CPAG focuses on eliminating poverty for children because:

Overall effects of poverty are worse for children — Child development is adversely affected by poverty, and can lead to detrimental effects for an entire life.

Children are more likely to experience poverty — Children are over-represented among those in deprived households.

Children don't get a say — Decisions affecting children are made without their input; state democracy involves only adults.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) was formed in 1994 to respond to the child poverty that had increased markedly following the 1991 budget changes. Large numbers of New Zealand children do not have safe, healthy homes; they experience hunger and ill health; and they are missing out on essentials needed to grow and develop. One of CPAG's earliest reports 'Poverty and Child Health: 1999', was a ground-breaking review linking economic decisions with their impact on increasing poverty levels and deteriorating health in children.

With the introduction of the Child Poverty Reduction Act in 2018, the prospect looked brighter for these children. There were — at last — agreed definitions of poverty, and a political willingness across most political parties to address poverty experienced by children.

As the first Minister for Child Poverty Reduction, former Prime Minister Ardern spearheaded a number of these changes. It was under her leadership that the government enacted the Child Poverty Reduction Act, implemented a Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, and initiated a number of incremental policies to reduce child poverty.

In this analysis we provide an overview of the regulatory framework within which child poverty is measured in New Zealand since 2018. We highlight successes of the approach undertaken, but also comment on one of its greatest failings — the inability to significantly reduce child poverty rates or address disparities in poverty for Māori, Pasifika, and children with disabilities (or those who live in a household with at least one disabled person). We conclude our report with a suite of recommendations and contemplate next steps.

While undertaking this report the author reviewed previous recommendations made in relation to child poverty in New Zealand, most notably the Commissioner for Children's Experts' review and report 'Child Poverty in New Zealand: Evidence for Action' (2012), and Welfare Expert Advisory Group's report 'Whakamana Tāngata: Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand' (2019). We note with concern that key recommendations from these reviews have not yet been introduced.

This report is dedicated to children in Aotearoa experiencing poverty. We hear your call for more to be done. You are our most vulnerable and valuable taonga. Your voice must be heard.

INTRODUCTION: MEASURING POVERTY

This report reviews recent changes to the law, policy and strategy of child poverty between the years 2018 and 2022. There were three major child poverty reduction developments in that time that are discussed, along with the context in which they are applied. These are:

- The Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018, with targets and annual reporting by Statistics New Zealand
- The Child Poverty Related Indicators required by the Child Poverty Reduction Act, and
- The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy), introduced in 2019, which sits within the Children's Act 2014

These developments have signalled vital first steps to address persistently high rates of poverty among children. While measuring poverty is a complicated, what counts as child poverty in New Zealand is now defined by the Child Poverty Reduction Act.

Absolute Poverty

The approach to poverty internationally uses two differing terms — 'absolute poverty' and 'relative poverty'. The evolution of the concept of absolute poverty is complex,¹ but it is broadly used to define poverty when income is insufficient to cover subsistence needs (such as food, housing, clothes etc). 'Absolute poverty' is not dependent on a relative income standard in a particular society, but relates directly to the ability to meet basic needs.² The World Bank uses this approach in setting the extreme poverty line globally at \$2.15 per person per day (set at September 2022).³

Does absolute poverty exist in New Zealand? Not on the World Bank income benchmark. However, if absolute poverty is understood as meaning the lack of income to cover basic subsistence needs, then a form of poverty closely related to absolute poverty may exist here, but is not specifically measured in New Zealand.

Relative Poverty

Relative poverty exists when income is significantly less than that received by most others in a society. This measure is necessarily dependent on relative income measures, with most affluent and OECD countries using the relative poverty measures to define poverty (with reference to median income).⁴ This 'relative' approach can be criticised for ignoring basic subsistence needs.^{5, 6}

To address concerns encapsulated in the two distinct approaches to poverty, a hybrid model has been suggested in Europe.⁷ In New Zealand a hybrid approach is apparent in one of the supplementary measures of poverty under the Child Poverty Reduction Act — that used to define 'low income and hardship' (section 20). The definition of 'low income and hardship' uses a combination of income and relative measures. Pursuant to this definition a child will fall into poverty if they live in a low income household [defined by section 16 as less than 60% of median equivalised Disposable Household Income (after deducting housing costs)] and they experience material hardship [as defined by section 12].

Poverty Line: A Moral Question for Society

How we define poverty is not purely an economic question; it is also a moral question, informed by political and cultural norms and beliefs. The level of poverty which is acceptable in any given country is a question for the people in that society to answer, including those people directly affected.

Sitting alongside the Child Poverty Reduction Act definitions of poverty discussed below is therefore the associated moral question for us as society to determine — “What is the appropriate ‘poverty line’ that should be adopted, below which no child is left behind?”

Unless otherwise stated, In this report the term ‘child poverty’ is used in a manner consistent with international approaches, and as suggested by the Children’s Commissioner (2012) report:⁸

Children living in poverty are those who experience deprivation of the material resources and income that is required for them to develop and thrive, leaving such children unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential and participate as equal members of New Zealand society.

Poverty Defined by Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018

With the passing of the Child Poverty Reduction Act, Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ) undertakes a leading role in reporting on child poverty. Pursuant to section 3, the purpose of the Child Poverty Reduction Act is to achieve a ‘significant and sustained reduction in child poverty’ by provisions that:

- encourage a focus by government and society on child poverty reduction
- facilitate political accountability against published targets
- require transparent reporting on levels of child poverty.

To achieve that purpose, section 4 outlines that the Child Poverty Reduction Act must:

- specify and require child poverty measures
- require the setting of child poverty reduction targets
- require reports relating to child poverty
- require the identification of child poverty related indicators
- require monitoring reports related to identified indicators.

Measures are designed to hold the government to account. In introducing the Child Poverty Reduction Bill to parliament in its first reading, former Prime Minister Ardern stated: “The essence of the bill is to build enduring political accountability, consensus, and action on the issue of child poverty and to reduce it.”⁹ The measures were seen as important to avoid the debate around contested definitions of poverty, which added confusion and undermined public confidence and political accountability.¹⁰ Stats NZ is mandated under the Child Poverty Reduction Act to report on ten official measures of child poverty, broken down by ethnicity, disability status, and region. The measurement matrix is a complex one, and the term ‘measures’ is itself separated out into primary and supplementary measures (section 5). These are explained below.

PRIMARY MEASURES OF CHILD POVERTY

What counts as a primary measure is specified in sections 10–13 of the Child Poverty Reduction Act. Government targets are set with reference only to primary measures (section 9). There are four primary measures:

Low income before housing costs: less than 50% of median equivalised disposable household income (DHI)¹¹ (without deducting housing costs) for the financial year (section 10)¹²

Low income after housing costs: less than 50% of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the base financial year (section 11)

Material hardship: defined by the Government Statistician (pursuant to section 5), a child will fall within this section if the child's household experiences material hardship (section 12)¹³

Persistent poverty: a term defined by the Government Statistician, a child will fall within the definition of 'persistent poverty' if the child's household experiences persistent poverty (section 12)¹⁴

DHI measures disposable household income as the total income for all household members 15 years and older, plus tax credits, and minus ACC levy and income tax. These data are collected from the government's annual household economic surveys. It is of great concern that children living in emergency housing and other forms of homelessness are not captured in these data.

The material hardship measure is used because income measures alone capture only one aspect of child poverty. Not all low-income households are in hardship, but some households with incomes above low-income lines (income poverty lines) may experience hardship.¹⁵ A helpful infographic for how child poverty is measured in New Zealand can be found at:

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/how-we-measure-child-poverty>

SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURES OF CHILD POVERTY

Supplementary measures (specified in sections 15–20) are used for reporting purposes only and not for setting government targets (see section 14). Supplementary measures are as follows:

- **Low income: less than 60%** of median equivalised DHI (without deducting housing costs) for the financial year¹⁶ (section 15)
- **Low income: less than 60%** of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the financial year (section 16)¹⁷
- **Low income: less than 50%** of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the financial year (section 17)¹⁸
- **Low income: less than 40%** of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the financial year (section 18)¹⁹
- **Severe material hardship:** a child falls within this section in a financial year if, for a period that is or includes all or any of the year, the child's household experiences severe material hardship (section 19)
- **Low income and hardship: less than 60% of** median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for financial year and material hardship (section 20).²⁰

Reporting Requirements

Three annual reporting requirements are built into the Child Poverty Reduction Act:

- (i) annual report by Stats NZ on nine child poverty reduction measures
- (ii) Budget day progress report on child poverty reduction targets, and how the Budget will reduce child poverty
- (iii) annual government report on the five Child Poverty Related Indicators (see the section after *Current Targets to Reduce Child Poverty*).

CURRENT TARGETS TO REDUCE CHILD POVERTY

The government is required to set targets under the Child Poverty Reduction Act. Targets are defined as either long-term or intermediate (section 5). Section 21 of the Child Poverty Reduction Act requires long-term targets (over a 10-year period; section 21(1)(a)), and immediate targets (defined as 3 financial years) to support the long-term targets (section 21 (1)(b)).

Targets are set or changed by notice in the New Zealand, and must be available on the internet (section 23). Each target must be reviewed at least once in the financial year(s) the target covers (section 26). Section 21(2) requires that the period covered by the long-term target is from 2018/19 financial year to the 2027/28 financial year and every later long-term period. For intermediate targets these are for the period 2018/2019 to 2020/2021 and every later intermediate period.

Targets are based on primary measures alone. Official long term (10-year) and intermediate (to 2020/21) targets were set in April 2019 (after the release of the baseline rates). The intermediate targets were set as follows:

- a) Reduce low income households on the before housing costs primary measure from 16.5% of children to 10.5%
- b) Reduce low income households on the after housing costs primary measure from 22.8% of children to 18.8%
- c) Reduce material hardship from 13.3% of children to 10.3%.

A 10-year target (i.e. by 2027/ 28) was also set that would see the government obliged to at least halve child poverty within 10 years as follows:

- a) Reduce low income households on the before housing costs primary measure from 16.5% of children to 5% — a reduction of around 120,000 children.
- b) Reduce low income households on the after housing costs primary measure from 22.8% of children to 10% — a reduction of around 130,000 children.
- c) Reduce material hardship from 13.3% of children to 6% — a reduction of around 80,000 children.

A second set of intermediate 3-year targets was set in June 2021 (for 2021/22 to 2023/24), requiring the government by 2023/24 to:

- a) Reduce poverty in low-income households on the before-housing-costs measure to 10%
- b) Reduce poverty in low income households on the after-housing costs measure to 15%
- c) Reduce material hardship to 9%.

Note there is no obligation under the Child Poverty Reduction Act for targets to raise all children out of poverty equally. Although measures supply data that is disaggregated by ethnicity (i.e. on how many Māori, Pasifika and disabled children are in these categories), the government is under no obligation to have targets that are disaggregated at this level. In other words, the government may meet its targets while leaving some categories of children behind. This has occurred, with rates of poverty being only marginally improved for Māori and Pasifika children. This inequity in addressing poverty reduction is concerning and we call on the government to take immediate action to address the disparities in child poverty rates.

The Child Poverty Reduction Act specifies that non-compliance with targets must be explained to the House of Representatives ‘as soon as is reasonably practicable’ after the report is presented, explaining why non-compliance has occurred (section 27). Cost of non-compliance is limited to a court declaration (High Court, or on appeal to the Court of Appeal or Supreme Court, section 28(1)), and no monetary compensation or relief is available in remedy for non-compliance (section 28(2)).

The Child Poverty Reduction Act expressly states that the targets do not create any legal right enforceable by law, affect the interpretation of any enactment or operation of any law, or restrict the ability of the Crown to exercise its powers and functions.²¹

CHILD POVERTY RELATED INDICATORS

The government is also required under the Child Poverty Reduction Act (section 4) to identify Child Poverty Related Indicators. These are defined broadly as any measure of anything that is, or may be, all or any of the following (section 5):

- (a) a cause of, or a factor that contributes to, child poverty
- (b) an event or a circumstance that occurs with (for example, as a correlate of, or incidental to) child poverty
- (c) a consequence of child poverty.

Note that section 38 of this Act requires the Minister to identify for monitoring reports one or more Child Poverty Related Indicators “related to all or any of the following areas”:

- (a) Income and employment
- (b) Housing
- (c) Education and development
- (d) Health (for example, physical health and mental health) and disability, and
- (e) Other area or areas.

Section 39 of this Act requires the indicators to be notified in the *New Zealand Gazette* and presented to the House of Representatives. There is a duty to review the indicators before the deadline for review of the Strategy (section 42).

On 3 September 2019 the government published its Child Poverty Related Indicators in the *New Zealand Gazette*.²² These are the five Child Poverty Related Indicators:

- **Housing affordability:** percentage of children (ages 0–17) living in households where housing accounts for more than 30 percent of disposable income
- **Housing quality:** percentage of children (ages 0–17) experiencing dampness or mould living as a major problem
- **Food insecurity:** percentage of children (ages 0–14) reporting that food runs out ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’.
- **Regular school attendance:** percentage of children and young people (ages 6–16) regularly attending school.
- **Potentially avoidable hospitalisations:** rate of children (ages 0–14) hospitalised for potentially avoidable illnesses.

Child Poverty Related Indicators allow a fuller picture of how children are affected by poverty. For example, the regular school attendance indicator is a useful tool to evaluate the effect poverty has on children’s educational opportunities. Disadvantages from poverty can create barriers to education for a wide variety of reasons, ranging from young people staying at home to care for younger siblings in a caregiver role while parents work, to difficulties in regular attendance caused by lack of secure housing, childhood illness contributed to by poor housing and overcrowding, and lack of money to pay for school uniforms, lunches, devices, and travel to school.²³

Child Poverty Related Indicators were reviewed in 2022 and under that process CPAG submitted that the official statistics fail, in some cases due to the time lag, to “capture contemporary realities”. CPAG’s submission suggested that Child Poverty Related Indicators be “extended and enhanced” to enable a fuller picture and indicate areas of action for policy to reduce poverty and its impacts on children. CPAG suggested some additional new measures:²⁴

- Specific measures in relation to families with children and how long they remain on the benefit, and changes in the take-up of benefit assistance
- Greater knowledge of changes in supplementary payments (such a Special Needs Grants and Temporary Additional Support) which would provide a better insight into household income inadequacy
- Qualitative data in terms of food bank usage
- Greater understanding of household occupancy rates and household rental expenditure in the form of collecting information around tenancy turnover children and households (given that high rates of tenancy turnover are more likely to have poor school attendance and known literacy and lower school qualifications)

- Increased data into NCEA completion and their relationship to low-income households given that a high number of rangatahi appear to be leaving school to support their families financially
- A better understanding of the link between poverty as a causal factor of child neglect
- Further information about debt, particularly for key utilities, to public organisations and to government agencies such as MSD (which increases financial pressure for households).

CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING STRATEGY

If the Child Poverty Reduction Act is the vehicle to hold the government to account in its progress on child poverty, then the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy) is the powerhouse by which that reduction in poverty is achieved.

On 18 August 2019 the Strategy was released under section 6 of the Children's Act 2014. This followed engagement of people from around New Zealand, including hearing the voices of more than 6000 children and young people.²⁵

Section 6 of the Children's Act 2014 states that the 'responsible minister'²⁶ must consult the Children's Ministers,²⁷ and adopt a strategy to improve wellbeing of all children (with a particular focus on those with greater needs), reduce child poverty and mitigate its impacts on those from socio-economic disadvantaged groups, and improve the well-being of the core populations on interest.

The term 'Children's Ministers' refers broadly to Ministers who: (a) have relevant portfolio responsibilities for one or more of the 'children agencies'; or (b) are designated by the Prime Minister as Children's Ministers for the purpose of the Children's Act 2014 (section 5, Children's Act 2014).²⁸

Note that 'children agencies' is itself defined as those departments responsible for the administration of all (or any) provisions of the following Acts:

- i. Domestic Violence Act 1995
- ii. Education and Training Act 2020
- iii. Pae Ora (Healthy Futures Act) 2022
- iv. Oranga Tamariki Act 1989²⁹
- v. Policing Act 2008
- vi. Social Security Act 2018, and
- vii. Any other Acts prescribed under Section 2

The intention of the Strategy is to enable New Zealand to meet its international obligations relating to children, including those obligations under the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.³⁰

Process to Amend the Strategy

It is sometimes overlooked that the Strategy is a statutory instrument, and a policy requirement under the Child Poverty Reduction Act that survives changes in government. The Strategy is not, therefore, a partisan policy that can be easily amended. Amendments and alterations to the Strategy (once it is established) are clearly restricted and defined by the Children's Act 2014, under which the Strategy sits.

Subsequent governments may, of course, amend the Children's Act 2014 to remove the strict procedures under which the Strategy can be amended; however, this is not an action subsequent governments would take lightly.

The process of amendment of the Strategy is directed by statute. Before the Strategy could be amended the Minister must have regard to policy related principles set out in section 6B of the Children's Act 2014, which include evidence of effectiveness at achieving social and economic outcomes, and the need to prevent or minimise negative social outcomes.

Section 6C provides that the Minister must have regard to child-related principles such as children's intrinsic value and inherent dignity (section 6C(a)); children's rights in New Zealand law including those derived from the UN Convention and the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (section 6(c)(b)); children should be viewed in the context of their families, whānau, hapu, and iwi, and other culturally recognised family groups and communities (section 6C(c)).

There exist special consultative requirements before the Strategy could be changed, which include (but not limited to):

- any children or representative of children that the Minister considers appropriate in order to ensure that children views are taken into account (section 6D(1)(a))
- the Children's Commissioner (section 6D(1)(b))
- the Minister of the Crown responsible for the Ministry of Māori Development (section 6D(1)(c)), and
- any representatives of Māori that the Minister considers appropriate (section 6D(1)(d)).

These requirements ensure that the Strategy survives changes in government and extends beyond election cycles to ensure consistency of planning in relation to children's issues (unless the law is amended).

With the passing of the Children and Young People's Commission Act 2022, the newly established Commission will (after 1 July 2023) take over responsibility for the Strategy from the Children's Commissioner.

Child Poverty Under the Strategy

In introducing the Child Poverty Reduction Bill to parliament, former Prime Minister Ardern acknowledged the crucial role the Strategy plays in child poverty reduction. Without the Strategy, targets are unlikely to be met, because the Strategy provides the 'roadmap' to achieve child poverty reduction. The Strategy ties subsequent governments to existing 'outcomes' and 'indicators of progress' (discussed below)— thus incorporating a long-term vision that transcends political changes in government.

The Strategy is explicitly required to include outcomes to reduce child poverty and mitigate impacts of child poverty and of socio-economic disadvantage.³¹ The outcomes must be measurable and the Strategy must include details of how these measurements will be made, including analysing disparities in relation to child poverty and children who are socio-economically disadvantaged (when compared with all children).

The Strategy must also include an assessment of the likely effect of government policies, including those aimed at reducing child poverty and mitigating impacts of child poverty or socio-economic disadvantage experienced by children (section 7(3)).

The Minister is required to prepare a report outlining progress against the Strategy outcomes.³² This must include analysis of ‘identified populations’, meaning Māori children and any other group identified by the Minister. While the Children’s Act 2014 does not identify or define these other groups, it does provide examples of children who may be identified:³³

- Pacific children
- Disabled children, and
- Children with a disabled parent, guardian, or caregiver.

Child Poverty Outcome in the Strategy — “Children and Young People Have What They Need”

There are six wellbeing outcomes in the Strategy. Child poverty is linked to one of these outcomes: “Children and Young People Have What They Need”.

The main outcome expected here is increasing material wellbeing of households living in poverty and hardship. The Strategy states that this outcome means:³⁴

- Children and their parents/caregivers have a good standard of material wellbeing
- Children have regular access to nutritious food
- Children live in stable housing that is affordable, warm and dry
- Parents/caregivers have the skills and support they need to access quality employment.

The Strategy recognises that poverty presents in various forms, from immediate needs including hunger, damp, or cold housing, to more child-centric hardships such as missing out on opportunities like school outings and sporting activities. The Strategy focuses on family and whānau, noting that child poverty rates are higher for those children where there is no parent in paid work: “This demonstrates the importance of parents developing the skills and other support they need to gain and stay in employment”.³⁵

Housing is also identified as a primary issue under the Strategy, which notes the negative health consequences of living in crowded conditions and high housing costs which leave less money to cover expenses such as transport, food, clothing, and healthcare.

The government identified key areas for focus with the overarching aim of improving the material wellbeing of households living in poverty and hardship. These were selected due to their potential to “break the cycle of disadvantage and intergenerational poverty as well as affect many other well-being outcomes.”³⁶

There are four main areas of focus for the outcome “Children and Young People Have What They Need”:³⁷

- a) **Improve earnings and employment:** Increase the minimum wage to \$20 per hour (by April 2021), and increase employment support through Ministry of Social Development including support for people with health conditions and disabilities to stay in meaningful employment and find employment.
- b) **Create a fairer and more equitable welfare system:** Improve incomes for low- and middle-income families with children by implementing a Families Package, review the welfare system using the Welfare Expert Advisory Group recommendations, ensure benefits are indexed to wages, and remove sanctions under 192 section of the Social Security Act 2018 (which operates to lower benefits for sole parents who do not identify the other parent of a child).
- c) **Improve housing affordability, quality and security:** The main initiative under this focus area was to build 6400 new public housing places by 2022. Other actions were to make legislative or regulatory changes necessary to ensure quality standards for rental homes, strengthen Housing First (to address chronic homelessness) and increase funding for transitional housing support.
- d) **Help families with the cost of essentials:** This covers initiatives to reduce the cost of essentials for families by introducing a free school lunch programme and revising school donations and funding for NCEA costs. The Strategy also looks backward to Budget 2018 and its provision of free GP visits and prescriptions to children (under the age of 14 years).

Actions are grouped under these areas, contained in the *Current Programme of Action* (August 2019), which outlines the lead agency and time frame for each of these measures.³⁸

PROGRAMME OF ACTION

The Programme of Action within the Strategy was made at its inception and can be updated regularly. One would expect this to be a clear plan that supports meeting poverty reduction targets and provides a roadmap across central and local government, community organisations and government departments. The word ‘plan’ does not occur in the Child Poverty Reduction Act, but there is an obligation under the Strategy for ‘assessment’. Therefore, while an action plan should in practice underlie the Strategy as a key foundational document to achieve the outcomes, there is no legislative basis requiring the government to create an action plan *specifically* for child poverty reduction under the Child Poverty Reduction Act.

In the Children’s Act 2014, section 7 stipulates that the Strategy includes an assessment statement which examines the effect of government policies, if those policies have an aim to either reduce child poverty or mitigate the impacts of child poverty for children. The assessment must outline the economic changes expected from the policy and how the policy impact “may be affected by any economic changes external to the policies” (section 7). The initial Programme of Action was launched in August 2019 with support from 20 government agencies and a dedicated fund of close to \$3.5 billion to improve child wellbeing.

A separate Oranga Tamariki action plan (the Plan) was introduced under The Children’s Amendment Act 2018 with requirements in relation to how chief executives of children’s agencies worked together to “improve the well-being of the core populations of interest to the department”.³⁹ Content of this Plan is set out in section 9 of the Children’s Amendment Act.⁴⁰ This provides that the chief executives must consider how the Plan will promote the best interests of the “core populations of interest” by “improving their social and economic well-being (for example, by reducing, or mitigating the impacts, of poverty” (section 9(2)(f)).

Note that the term “core populations of interest to the department” is defined narrowly in section 5 of the Children’s Act 2014 as children who have risk factors for involvement with Oranga Tamariki, children in care and protection or subject to custody orders, children subject to court proceedings, those under age of 21 years who have been in care, and those receiving transition support.

This means that although the ‘Plan’ under section 9(2) talks about *improving social and economic well-being by reducing and mitigating the impacts of poverty*, this only relates to those “core populations of interest”, which is limited to those children identified above (section 5, Children’s Act 2014) and therefore does not automatically include all children living in poverty who do not fall within this narrow definition.

The Programme of Action covers a wide range of initiatives covering all Strategy outcomes.

Children and Young People Have What They Need — Indicators to Track Progress

The Strategy has six well-being outcomes. The government sets out 36 indicators to help measure progress towards these outcomes (note that these are different from the measures contained in the Child Poverty Reduction Act discussed above).⁴¹ Of these 36 indicators, 15 are primary indicators sourced from the Youth Health and Well-being Survey. The government has chosen five indicators to track its progress that relate to “Children and Young People have What they Need”.⁴² These are a mix of child poverty measures under the Child Poverty Reduction Act and its Child Poverty Related Indicators:

- a) Material wellbeing
- b) Child poverty
- c) Food insecurity (also Child Poverty Related Indicator)
- d) Housing quality (also Child Poverty Related Indicator)
- e) House affordability (also Child Poverty Related Indicator)

Programme of Action for “Children and Young People Have What They Need”

Under the outcome “Children and Young People Have What They Need” there are a wide range of actions, including:⁴³

- a) **Housing:** Strengthening the Housing First programme (which supported 359 new individuals and whānau accepted into the programme), an additional \$6m agreed by Cabinet to respond to demand for Housing Support Products, a Homelessness Action Plan (met 17 out of 18 targets including delivering 1005 new transitional housing places by February 2021), providing targeted housing outcomes for Māori including establishment of Whai Kāinga Oranga, and a working initiative towards bringing Pacific families into home ownership with a dedicated Housing Unit to implement delivery.
- b) **Food security:** Free and Healthy School Lunch Programme (Ka Ora, Ka Ako) with the Ministry of Education (by the end of Term 4, 210,000 students at 918 schools received lunches). COVID-19 disruptions caused an underspend in the school lunch programme and assistance was transferred to the New Zealand Food Network, community grants, and assistance to charities such as KidsCan and Eat My Lunch.
- c) **Social Security:** Benefit increases and changes to abatement, removal of subsequent child policy.
- d) **Disability:** Launch of Whaikaha, the new Ministry of Disabled People, and support for expanding employment services to support disabled persons.
- e) **Welfare reform:** A multi-year project to overhaul of the welfare system including a key focus for 2022 the review of Working for Families.⁴⁴

In its *Well-being Budget 2022: A Secure Future*, the government identified additional key areas of focus to reduce child poverty:

- From 2023 making changes to child support payments to sole parent beneficiaries to have child support payments ‘passed on’ to them rather than being retained by the government
- Lifting incomes for around 346,000 families with changes to Working for Families (on average \$20 per week), announced the preceding year and implemented on 1 April 2022
- Following up on a Budget 2021 announcement to bring a second main benefit increase (in an attempt to bring benefit rates in line with key recommendations of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group)
- Introducing a \$350 cost of living payment over three months (note that this was not available to those on the benefit or receiving the Winter Energy Payment).

These additional measures were implemented to mitigate the increase in cost of living affecting low- and middle-income families as well, not exclusively families in poverty. This package included measures to reduce transport costs by an extension to the reduction of fuel excise duty, an extension in the road user charges, cuts in public transport (an extension in the half price public transport for all until August 2022), and from September the extension of half-price public transport to those permanently using community service cards (estimated to be in excess of 1 million people).⁴⁵

It was anticipated in the 2022 Budget that these changes would lift between 10,000 and 18,000 more children out of poverty (on the ‘after housing cost measure’) in 2023 to 2024, and lift between 16,000 and 30,000 more children out of poverty (on the ‘before housing costs’ measure) in 2023 to 2024. Note that the margins of error for these measures are high.

A fuller record of government programmes allocated to address child poverty in the 2022 Budget is available.⁴⁶ A full stocktake of the government’s programme of action and whether it has implemented the actions anticipated in 2019 is beyond the scope of this report but should be undertaken to clearly understand how the government is tracking.

Children and Young People Have What They Need — Indicators of Progress

The Strategy has five indicators to track its progress that relate to the outcome *Children and Young People have What they Need*.⁴⁷ These are a mix of child poverty measures under the Child Poverty Reduction Act and its Child Poverty Related Indicators:

- a) Material wellbeing
- b) Child poverty
- c) Food insecurity (also Child Poverty Related Indicator)
- d) Housing quality (also Child Poverty Related Indicator)
- e) House affordability (also Child Poverty Related Indicator).

REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY IN 2022

A complete review of the Strategy was required within three years after the date of its first adoption, and within three years after that review was completed.⁴⁸ In April 2022 Cabinet agreed to the parameters of the first review of the Strategy. The main parameters of the review were fourfold, and focused around the following:⁴⁹

1. How the Strategy could drive and prioritise government policy
2. How more collective ownership of the strategy among communities and non-government organisations could be encouraged
3. Consideration of efficiencies in monitoring and reporting arrangements
4. Consideration of ways to integrate Te Ao Māori concepts of wellbeing into the strategy more effectively

This initial review identified that significant areas of improvement were needed in keys areas.⁵⁰ While the ‘aspirational’ nature of the document was applauded, the review stated that “...key groups, particularly Māori as well as Pasifika, disabled and migrant children and youth are not accorded adequate priority within the Strategy.”⁵¹ Moreover, at the governance level, the Strategy lacked Māori participation which did not fulfil the Crown’s Tiriti o Waitangi obligations.⁵² This led to a key recommendation that strong Māori participation in Strategy leadership be prioritised and consideration be given to reinstating a Strategy Reference Group to provide independent advice and expertise from Māori, Pasifika and NGO representatives.⁵³

The review also noted the lack of specific priorities for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau, which operated to ‘undermine’ the ability of the Strategy “to make meaningful change for Māori”.⁵⁴

Subsequent targeted engagement followed between June and July 2022 with 40 individuals from a range of stakeholder organisations and expert advisors, including child and youth engagement.⁵⁵ This engagement sought feedback on a range of matters including whether the Strategy outcomes and priorities were the right ones, what barriers existed for implementing the Strategy, the role of central government in supporting communities to implement the Strategy, and the wide impacts of COVID-19 on child and youth wellbeing.⁵⁶

The final review recommended no changes to be made to the Strategy in relation to the six outcomes but shifted to focus on additional support for implementation of the Strategy. The review signalled that a significant shift was needed towards how the government worked with Iwi and Māori to enable the outcomes to be achieved for the wellbeing of all children and young people.

Five areas of improvement were identified with the Strategy’s implementation, some of which would require further budget funding in 2023. The five areas can be summarised as:⁵⁷

- Increasing the representation of Iwi / Māori, Pacific voices, and children and young people with a focus on whānau-centred and community-led approaches to encourage a ‘learning system’ that included a diverse range of voices
- On a governance level ensure coordination across agencies and communities to shift governance from central government to community based and whānau based leadership
- Making sure that each action receives the priority it requires / needs by measuring and prioritising those actions that have the biggest impact on children. This includes prioritising actions that address significant disparities in New Zealand
- Increased efficiencies and the monitoring, measuring and reporting of the Strategy
- Ensuring focus on Te Ao Māori and associated concepts of wellbeing in the Strategy implementation.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The Child Poverty Reduction Act and the Strategy has signalled a significant systemic change to the way child poverty is measured and discussed in New Zealand. We applaud this new approach but note that the multiple poverty measures under the Child Poverty Reduction Act are complex and may create barriers to engagement. In other jurisdictions a single ‘poverty line’ is used as an agreed measure to create one consistent point which can easily determine, on a year-by-year trend, if poverty statistics are improving. A watchful gaze should be kept on New Zealand’s approach to ensure the definitions and measures of poverty are keeping pace with growing understandings of best practice internationally. We specifically draw attention to the following matters.

Disparity in Child Poverty Rates

Current approaches to child poverty are leaving some children behind. The Child Poverty Monitor Technical Report expresses concern with the inequity of child poverty in Aotearoa, stating:⁵⁸

European children have met the population level targets for proportions living in low-income households or in households experiencing material hardship. Implementation of policies that overcome systemic disadvantage are needed to extend this achievement to all children and their households, including tamariki Māori, Pacific children and disabled children.

The child poverty Indicators under the Strategy show stark disparities in poverty rates. Māori, Pacific, and disabled children and children living with a disabled household member have rates of poverty much greater than the overall population. These disparities in poverty rates is not adequately addressed in the current approach, nor is it identified sufficiently in the Child Poverty Reduction Act as a required target.

The government has acknowledged that we are now in a ‘cost of living crisis’. While this government has embarked on a plan to incrementally reduce poverty measured against a series of targets, this stepwise implementation response still leaves children behind and is insufficient to alleviate poverty for our most vulnerable children.⁵⁹ We remain concerned that there is a lack of significant affirmative social measures to address disparities and we note that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states that these measures are required ‘even in situations of economic crisis, natural disasters or other emergencies’ to alleviate poverty.⁶⁰

The First 1000 Days

The first 1000 days of life are a crucial window of development for a child, being measured from conception to 2 years of age and adopted by UNICEF. Poverty creates family stress, which in turn has negative impacts on a child, especially in the first few years.⁶¹ Poverty is linked to higher rates of infant mortality, lower rates of breastfeeding, lack of ability to provide a warm, safe bed and environment for a newborn, and low birth weight.⁶²

The Health Promotion Agency notes: “Robust evidence shows it is critical to invest in the first 1,000 days, so that every child gets the strongest start to life. We must act early.”⁶³ The “Best Start” payments, introduced as part of the Families Package in 2018, was based on the premise that the first 1000 days of life were of crucial importance to a child’s development potential and wellbeing.⁶⁴

In recognition of the impact of poverty on pre-schoolers and the differentiation of experiences of poverty on children for different age-stage brackets, the *Child Poverty in New Zealand Report* (Bryan Perry, October 2022) now reports on material hardship rates for under-fives and under seven years using different hardship thresholds. For both groups the same pattern is evident; namely that those in households with only younger children experienced the lowest hardship rate, while those in households with older siblings experience higher rates of poverty.⁶⁵ In conclusion the report found “there is no evidence of the ‘early years’ groups being in greater material hardship than the older children”.⁶⁶

While this conclusion is heartening, what is important to recognise is that current material hardship questions do not sufficiently identify hardship in the pre-school years. Of equal concern is the fact that there is limited recognition in the current reporting that hardship in these early years has a disproportionate effect on a child’s ability to reach his or her developmental potential.

We are concerned that current measures of child poverty in New Zealand rely on broad-based datasets, with reporting often ranging from 0 to 18 years. We note that national health data are disaggregated down to 0–4 years, and these data are a valuable source of information to enable medical services to be planned and gaps in service delivery understood.⁶⁷

We call for datasets in relation to child poverty to be further disaggregated by age to provide meaningful analysis of the impact of poverty on a child’s growth and development. This is consistent with Articles 6, 26, and 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Whānau-centred Community Approaches in Partnership with Iwi and Hapu

Child poverty for tamariki Māori needs responses that recognise the wider impact of colonisation to give effect to the guarantees under te Tiriti. High rates of child poverty, food insecurity and obesity have been linked to the failure to give effect to te Tiriti, and along with the impacts of colonisation, have worked to erode Māori-owned resource and economic base, including access to, cultivation of and preparation of traditional foods in accordance with Māori laws and customs.⁶⁸

Current research suggests that part of the solution to food insecurity for Māori will be a “decolonising approach where Māori voices and values are central within New Zealand policies policy-making process”.⁶⁹ We support the key recommendation of the Commissioner for Children’s Experts’ report *Child Poverty in New Zealand: Evidence for Action* (2012), that “the government take additional action to reduce poverty and mitigate its effects for Māori children and young people so they are on a par with other children in New Zealand.”⁷⁰

A shift towards more inclusive measures for poverty, that embed policy and budget ‘triggers’ with clearly budgeted lines are needed to address disparities in poverty rates for tamariki Māori. At the moment inequities in child poverty are measured under the Child Poverty Reduction Act, but no specific targets are put in place to address these.

Specific programmes aimed at groups experiencing the highest rates of poverty would ensure these children reach parity with others, and recognise specific rights of tamariki Māori under te Tiriti. Current targets — based on the whole population level — are too broad, and fail to address the high levels of poverty experienced by those experiencing highest rates of hardship and deprivation.

Persistent Poverty

In her parliamentary speech (at the initial committee stage hearings of the Child Poverty Reduction Bill) former Prime Minister Ardern spoke forcefully about the need for a definition of persistent poverty as a tool to inform about children under a certain age (she indicated as an example 0–5 years) who experience persistent poverty.⁷¹ Persistent poverty exists when a child experiences poverty over multiple and consecutive years of their life.

Pursuant to Schedule 1 of the Child Poverty Reduction Act, the definition for persistent poverty is required only “for and after the financial year commencing on 1 July 2025” (see Schedule 1 clause 2(1)). Targets for persistent poverty are required only for and after the 2025–26 financial year (i.e. after 1 July 2025), but must be set before 31 December 2024 (See Schedule 1 clause 4).⁷²

However direction to bring these dates forward may be given under the Child Poverty Reduction Act by the minister responsible for child poverty.

As New Zealand does not currently measure persistent poverty, the affected children are rendered invisible, and no targets have been set for reduction. The national poverty response is not tailored to them.

We call on the government to take immediate steps to define and address persistent poverty and use its powers to make this happen prior to 1 July 2025.⁷³

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. NEED FOR WHĀNAU-CENTRED COMMUNITY APPROACHES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MĀORI

High rates of poverty experienced by tamariki Māori children must be considered within the wider context of the impact of colonisation and a failure to honour the guarantees made to Māori under te Tiriti.⁷⁴ We call on the government to urgently implement changes in the operation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy identified in its 2022 review. This includes accelerating the representation of Iwi / Māori voices, and children and young people with a focus on whānau-centred and community-led approaches to encourage a 'learning system' that includes a diverse range of voices.

2. NEED FOR ACCELERATED RESPONSES TO REDUCE INEQUITIES IN POVERTY RATES

Current targets are too broad, and fail to address the inordinately high levels of poverty experienced by Māori, Pasifika, and children with disabilities (or those who live with a disabled person). CPAG calls on the government to revise its strategy and action plan, specifically to address inequities in child poverty for the most severely affected groups of children in society (Māori, Pasifika, children with disabilities, and children of sole parent families). An accelerated response to address these inequities is necessary to ensure that no child is left behind.

3. MONITORING AND TARGETING FOR THE FIRST 1000 DAYS

There is an urgent need for disaggregated data by age and stage of development with a focus on the first 1000 days of life (pregnancy to 2 years), and the creation of strengthened child-centric measures for material hardship. Current measures focus too heavily on a broad age range of 0–17 years, which does not allow adequate consideration of the effects of poverty on development for the child as anticipated by Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. CPAG calls on the government to implement a poverty reduction plan prioritising the first 1000 days.

4. PERSISTENT POVERTY

CPAG requests the Minister responsible for the Child Poverty Reduction Act to implement an accelerated programme to address persistent poverty as provided for under clause 2(2) of Schedule 1, Part 1 of this Act. We call on the Minister to direct the statistician to immediately define 'persistent poverty'. This will enable a policy response to address long-term issues affecting whānau and family that cause children to live in poverty over consecutive years of their lives.

5. CHILDREN IN EMERGENCY HOUSING

Statistics for the child poverty measures are based on the Household Economic Survey, but children living in emergency housing and other forms of homelessness are not captured in this data. We call on Stats NZ to collect data on children living in emergency housing for the purposes of measuring material hardship under the Child Poverty Reduction Act.

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- 1 See Moatsos, Michail, “Global Absolute Poverty: The Evolution of its Measurement”, ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics, Kiel, Hamburg (2020)
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- 3 World Bank Fact Sheet (2022) <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2022/05/02/fact-sheet-an-adjustment-to-global-poverty-lines>
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- 6 Benoit Decerf, “Combining absolute and relative poverty: income poverty measurement with two poverty lines, Social Choice and Welfare” (2021) 56:325–362 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00355-020-01279-7>
- 7 Commission European “Portfolio of indicators for the monitoring of the European Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion”. European Commission, Brussels (2015)
- 8 *Solutions to Child Poverty in New Zealand: Evidence for Action*, Prepared by the Children’s Commissioner’s Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (2012), at p2.
- 9 Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern Hansard debate, Child Poverty Reduction Bill- First Reading https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/hansard-debates/rhr/combined/HansDeb_20180213_20180213_16
- 10 Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern Hansard debate, Child Poverty Reduction Bill- First Reading https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/hansard-debates/rhr/combined/HansDeb_20180213_20180213_16
- 11 DHI refers to disposable household income which is measured as the total income for all household members 15 years and older, plus tax credits, and minus ACC levy and income tax
- 12 Section 11 provides that: “(1) A child falls within this section in a financial year if the child’s household’s equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the year is less than the applicable level; (2) The applicable level is the specified amount (50% of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the base financial year) after the specified amount is adjusted to take account of changes in the value of money after the base financial year.”
- 13 Note, section 12 provides that in any financial year this may be for “a period that is or includes all or any of the year”.
- 14 Note, section 13 provides that in any financial year this may be for “a period that is or includes all or any of the year”.
- 15 Bryan Perry, ‘Child Poverty in New Zealand’ (Ministry of Social Development, Wellington) June 2021, p31
- 16 “A child falls within this section in a financial year if the child’s household’s equivalised DHI (without deducting housing costs) for the year is less than 60% of median equivalised DHI (without deducting housing costs) for the year.” Section 15
- 17 “A child falls within this section in a financial year if the child’s household’s equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the year is less than 60% of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the year” Section 16
- 18 “A child falls within this section in a financial year if the child’s household’s equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the year is less than 50% of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the year.” Section 17
- 19 “A child falls within this section in a financial year if the child’s household’s equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the year is less than 40% of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for the year” Section 18

- 20 “A child falls within this section in a financial year if, in the year,— (a) the child falls within section 16 (low income: less than 60% of median equivalised DHI (after deducting housing costs) for financial year); and (b) the child falls within section 12 (material hardship)” Section 20.
- 21 Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018, section 28(5).
- 22 <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2019-ps4131>
- 23 See discussion in “Child Poverty Related Indicators Report for the ending 30 June 2021” (published April 2022) p 22.
- 24 See Submission from Child Poverty Action Group on Child Poverty Related Indicators & July 2022
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60189fe639b6d67b861cf5c4/t/6SUBMISSION+FROM+CHILD+POVERTY+ACTION+GROUP+ON+CHILD+POVERTY+RELATED+INDICATORS+3741d242e72854c0d0d0ccf9/1668554021439/CPRI+SUBMISSION+final.pdf>
- 25 Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Review, “Summary Report of the Child and Youth Engagement” (August 2022), p4.
- 26 Defined in section 5 of the Children’s Act 2014 to mean the Minister of the Crown designated by the Prime Minister as the responsible minister.
- 27 Section 5 of the Children’s Act 2014 states that Children’s Ministers means Ministers of the crown who for the time being; (a) have relevant portfolio responsibilities for one or more of the ‘children agencies’, (but excluding all related associate ministers of the crown); or (b) are designated by the Prime Minister as children’s Ministers for the purpose of the Children’s Act 2014. Note that ‘children agencies’ is defined as those departments of state or instruments of the crown that are responsible either solely or with other departments for the administration of all or any provisions of the of the domestic violence act 1995
- 28 Note that the Children’s Amendment Act 2018 came in to force on 20 December 2018 and in doing so amended the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 renaming that as the Children Act 2014. The term ‘vulnerable children’ was replaced with ‘children’ in the title and it was this Act that inserted the amendments to the newly named Children Act, relating to the Strategy engagement and policy related principles that the Minister must have regard to before the Strategy is adopted or changed (see sections 6, 6A, 6B, 6D, 6E, 7 of the Children’s Amendment Act 2018).
- 29 Note that the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022 gained its Royal Assent on 29 August 2022, and will come into force on 1st July 2023. While this creates a new oversight mechanism of Oranga Tamariki, the Oranga Tamariki Act itself is not repealed by the new legislation.
- 30 Pursuant to section 6A, inserted on 21 December 2018 under section 8 of Children’s Amendment Act 2018)
- 31 Under Section 7 of the Children’s Act 2014
- 32 Section 7B of the Children Act 2014. Report must be within nine months after the financial year.
- 33 See section 7C(4). This further analysis is not required if the available data is not reasonably adequate to enable the analysis to be done using relevant statistical methodology (section 7C(5)).
- 34 See Child and Youth Well-being Strategy 2019, p 39
- 35 See Child and Youth Well-being Strategy 2019, p 39
- 36 See Child and Youth Well-being Strategy 2019, p 40
- 37 <https://www.childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/our-aspirations/context/reducing-child-poverty>
- 38 Current Programme of Action (August 2019) Pp 18 – 25.
- 39 Section 7D Children’s Amendment Act inserted this wording into section 7D Children’s Act 2014.

- 40 Which inserted a new section 9 into the Children’s Act 2014.
- 41 See Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, “Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2021” (Released 2022) p 6.
- 42 These are a mix of official measures under the Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018, or gazetted Child Poverty Related Indicators (CPRIs) formally identified under the Act. See Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, “Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2021” (Released 2022) p 27.
- 43 “Monitoring Report, Monitoring of Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Implementation 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2021”, Released 22 June 22
- 44 “Monitoring Report, Monitoring of Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Implementation” 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2021, Released 22 June 22, p 14.
- 45 See measures announced in Minister of Finance, Wellbeing Budget Speech 19 May 2022;
<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/minister-finance-wellbeing-budget-2022-speech>
- 46 <https://www.childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/about/news/child-poverty-report-budget-2022>
- 47 These are a mix of official measures under the Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018, or gazetted Child Poverty Related Indicators (CPRIs) formally identified under the Act. See Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, “Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2021” (Released 2022) p 27.
- 48 Section 7A of the Children’s Amendment Act 2018 (which renamed the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 the Children’s Act 2014) requires that the Minister responsible for the Strategy conduct this review in the timeframe.
- 49 See Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Briefing Paper: Review of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Findings and Recommendations* (proactive release) 16 August 2022, p 1.
- 50 Allen and Clarke, “Process Evaluation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy: Final Report” February 2022.
- 51 Allen and Clarke, “Process Evaluation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy: Final Report” February 2022, p5.
- 52 Allen and Clarke, “Process Evaluation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy: Final Report” February 2022, p 6.
- 53 Allen and Clarke, “Process Evaluation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy: Final Report” February 2022, Recommendation 1 and 2 at p 47.
- 54 Allen and Clarke, “Process Evaluation of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy: Final Report” February 2022, p6.
- 55 A full summary of child and youth engagement is available at “Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Review, Summary Report of the Child and Youth Engagement” (August 2022)
- 56 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Briefing Paper: Review of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Findings and Recommendations* (proactive release) 16 August 2022, p 2.
- 57 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Briefing Paper: Review of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Findings and Recommendations* (proactive release) 16 August 2022, p 3.
- 58 M Duncanson, Roy M, van Asten, et al, “Child Poverty Monitor: Technical Report” 2022, Dunedin. New Zealand Child and Youth Epidemiology Service, University of Otago, p7.
- 59 The current programme of action is leaving significant levels of children behind, predominantly from groups such as Māori, Pasifika, and children with disabilities (or who live in a family with a disability). On the Government’s own measures, there exist higher rates of poverty for children from Māori, Pasifika, and disabled families.
- 60 Committee on the Rights of the Child, ‘Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of New Zealand’ CRC/C/NZL/CO/6 6 Feb 2023

- 61 See discussion of ‘investment model’ c.f. ‘family stress’ model in, NHS. Health Scotland, “Child Poverty in Scotland: Health Impact and Health Inequalities” (2018)
- 62 For a helpful discussion of the wider social determinants of sudden infant death and the role poverty plays see Carla Houkamau, David Tipene-Leach Kathrine Clarke, “The high price of being labelled “high risk”: Social context as a health determinant for sudden unexpected infant death in Māori communities” New Zealand College of Midwives Journal, Issue 52 (2016)
- 63 See for example Health Promotion Agency (Te Hiringa Hauora) “First 1,000 Days Programme summary”
- 64 Best Start allows for a payment of \$65 per week to families with newborns.
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- 66 Bryan Perry, “Child Poverty in New Zealand” (Ministry of Social Development, Wellington) October 2022, p 36
- 67 See details in Cure Kids State of Child Health in Aotearoa New Zealand (2021). <https://curekids.org.nz/state-of-child-health/>
- 68 See Chanel Phillips, Anne-Marie Jackson, Hauiti Hakopa “Creation Narratives of Mahinga Kai” DOI; 10.20507/MAI Journal.2016.5.1.5.
- 69 Christina Mckerchar, *et al* “Ensuring the right to food for indigenous children: a case study of stakeholder perspectives on policy options to ensure the rights of tamariki Māori to healthy food’ International Journal for Equity in health, 20, Article number 67 (2001)
- 70 Recommendation 31, *Solutions to Child Poverty in New Zealand: Evidence for Action*, Prepared by the Children’s Commissioner’s Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (2012), p 50
- 71 Hansard speech, “Child Poverty Reductin Bill- In Committee” sitting date 27 November 2018, Child Poverty Reduction Bill transcript. https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/hansard-debates/rhr/combined/HansDeb_20181127_20181127_24
- 72 Pursuant to Schedule 1 clause 4(3), if the Statistician definition of persistent poverty is established prior to the financial year commencing 1 July 2025, then the reporting requirements for persistent poverty are brought forward accordingly.
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- 74 Dr M. Claire Dale, “Whakapono: End child poverty in Maori whānau- A preliminary report” Child Poverty Action Group (2017), p 16