

Letters to the editor *Guidelines*

Do you feel strongly about a child poverty issue? Write a letter to the editor using our simple letter writing techniques, list of email addresses and examples of sample letters (family income assistance, housing, health, education, gambling etc):

- All newspapers require your name, personal address and daytime telephone number.
- Do not send your letter as an attachment. Use cut and paste.
- Check the word length accepted by the newspaper (usually around 150 words). Longer letters may be published but could be edited in a way you do not agree with.
- The brevity of letters means you can only make one or two points. Make sure your arguments are set out in a logical way.
- Get someone unfamiliar with the issue to read the letter – does it make sense to that person?
- Stick to the issues and avoid personal attacks (even if you are responding to a personal attack).
- Try to respond to an issue as soon as possible.
- Proofread your letter carefully and check your word length.
- Letters can be emailed –put *letter to the editor* in the subject line.
- If you have any questions or want a letter to the editor checked, email admin@cpag.org.nz

Email addresses of main daily papers

Letter to editor in subject line/cut and paste text

Ashburton Guardian	enquiries@theguardian.co.nz
Bay of Plenty Times	editor@bopp.co.nz
Dominion Post	letters@dompost.co.nz
Daily News	editor@tnl.co.nz
Daily Post	news@dailypost.co.nz
Gisborne Herald	editorial@gisborneherald.co.nz
Greymouth Evening Star	editor@greystar.co.nz
Hawkes Bay Today	editor@hbtoday.co.nz
Manawatu Standard	editor@msl.co.nz
Marlborough Express	mailbox@marlexpress.co.nz
Nelson Mail	chiefreporter@nelsonmail.co.nz
New Zealand Herald	letters@nzherald.co.nz
Northern Advocate	editor@northernadvocate.co.nz
Oamaru Mail	news@oamarumail.co.nz
Otago Daily Times	odt.editor@alliedpress.co.nz
Sunday Star Times	feedback@star-times.co.nz
Taranaki Daily News	editor@tnl.co.nz
The Press	editorial@press.co.nz
Timaru Herald	editor@timaruherald.co.nz
Waikato Times	editor@waikatotimes.co.nz
Wairarapa Times Age	editor@age.co.nz
Wanganui Chronicle –go to:	http://www.wanganuichronicle.co.nz/info/feedback/

West Coast Times	editor@greystar.co.nz
Westport News	editorial@westportnews.co.nz

(Please contact us if any of these email addresses cannot be accessed or change)

Sample letters (We have not included personal contact details)

Check out www.cpaq.org.nz for CPAG views on individual issues

Housing

Friday, July 23, 2004
Editor NZ Herald

When is the Auckland community going to wake up and realize the housing shortage is reaching crisis point? The latest Council-commissioned report shows 972 people waiting for state homes in Henderson and high demand in Waitakere.

Increasingly we hear reports of families living in tents and garages. These homeless children face disrupted education and an uncertain future? We also know these children are at greater risk of a range of serious infectious diseases.

It is good news that the Friendship Centre Trust and Housing New Zealand hope to open an emergency house in west Auckland later this year but one house cannot accommodate the number of families without housing.

The housing crisis needs a concerted effort by Government and Councils. All New Zealand children deserve to be raised in an adequate standard of housing.
Dr Gay Keating

Health

Sunday Star-Times

Currently, one out of every two Pacific babies in South Auckland is admitted to hospital before their first birthday.

Plunket should not have to use up precious resources looking for funding, otherwise shocking, sad and embarrassing paediatric disease statistics like this one will only get worse.

Given that 30% of New Zealand children are living in poverty, and children's health experiences in their first five years of life have consequences for their entire lifetime, Plunket is one of New Zealand's most essential preventative care services.

The government needs to increase its funding to Plunket by at least enough to give all preschool children the eight Plunket visits they are entitled to under the 2002 Well Child framework.

Janfrie Wakim

Family violence

Editor Dominion Post

The Dominion Post's report (Friday July 19) that 8500 children in New Zealand will be sexually abused for the first time this year is a shocking wake-up call for this country. The report quotes research by Massey University, which found the total cost to society from child abuse was \$2.4 million a year. Social costs include psychological problems and drug abuse.

The Public Health Association strongly supports recommendations by the study's authors that prevention of child abuse should be a priority. While it could be argued that poverty is only one of the causes of child abuse, it is clearly a factor in many cases.

Respected groups such as UNICEF and the Institute of Public Policy of AUT have identified poverty as one of the major causes of family violence. It is time to listen to the widening number of groups calling for all political parties to take part in a summit on ending poverty. The cost of ignoring these serious social problems is too high.

Gay Keating

Family incomes

NZ Herald

Emma Davies has it in a nutshell: "Adults struggling to survive are less likely to be able to nurture children."

NZ allows its poorest families to struggle along on income levels barely adequate for the myriad needs of a growing child - a balanced diet, schooling costs, adequate clothing.

The child abuse and poverty headlines are everywhere. Yet so often we hide our heads in the sand when it comes to a key source of the poverty, abuse and neglect afflicting our children: inadequate and insecure family incomes.

We are now seeing government policies slowly beginning to make up for years of income neglect. Overall, however, more needs to be done, and urgently, to halt the victimization of children which stems from our neglect of child wellbeing at many levels of society, including government.

The problems are now so complex and entrenched that more money alone will not, of course, be enough to solve them. The good news is a little extra income goes a long way towards doing so.

Rachel Somerfield

