

Delivering better public services

BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES RESULT 4

SAFER KIDS: REDUCING ASSAULTS AND ABUSE OF CHILDREN

RESULT ACTION PLAN

Contents

Minister's foreword	1
Safer kids: reducing assaults and abuse of children	2
Working together to achieve this Result	3
Measuring success	5
Future developments	8



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. In essence, you are free to copy, distribute and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to the Crown and abide by the other licence terms.

To view a copy of this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. Please note that no departmental or governmental emblem, logo or Coat of Arms may be used in any way which infringes any provision of the Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act 1981. Attribution to the Crown should be in written form and not by reproduction of any such emblem, logo or Coat of Arms.

Published May 2017

Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki Private Bag 3004 Wellington 6011 New Zealand

Telephone: +64 4 917 3000

Email: info@mvcot.govt.nz

Web: www.mvcot.govt.nz

ISBN: 978-0-947513-76-4 (print)

ISBN978-0-947513-77-1 (online)

Minister's foreword

The Government has made good progress on reducing assaults of children since we established this as a Better Public Services Result area in 2012. We have halted the 10-year rise in children experiencing physical abuse, and the trend in the numbers is declining.

We have now renamed the Result Area as **Safer kids: Reduce assaults and abuse of children**. We have also set a much more ambitious target of reducing the number of children experiencing a substantiated incidence of physical or sexual abuse by 20% by 2021.

Achievement of the new target will be supported by the major system reforms, and the complete overhaul of care and protection, that the Government is introducing. These reforms include the establishment of a new operating model, underpinned by an investment approach. It will ensure that children and young people are kept safe and secure, and achieve better outcomes, by repositioning the system to put them at the centre of investment decisions.

The new Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki, will lead the work on these reforms. It will also be ultimately responsible for achieving the new target, but it will need the cooperation and support from the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development, as well as Police and Corrections. The Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki will also require active support and feedback from families, communities and iwi to better design and deliver services and support that work.



Hon Anne Tolley
Minister for Children

Safer kids: reducing assaults and abuse of children

Reduce the number of children experiencing physical and sexual abuse by 20 percent by 2021.

Many of our most vulnerable children and young people experience assaults and sexual abuse, which can seriously diminish their life chances and, in the worst cases, result in death.

The Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki will be formally established on 1 April 2017, providing a renewed focus and energy on improving the outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, including those at risk of physical and sexual abuse.

Why this result is important for New Zealand

Every child and young person has a right to grow up in a safe environment. Safety from physical and sexual abuse sets the foundation for positive future physical and mental development, helps children establish effective relationships with their families, communities and iwi, and breaks the negative cycle of deprivation and disadvantage.

Actions already underway

The previous BPS target focused on reducing physical abuse towards children and young people. As a result, there are a number of actions already underway that will help to address the new, expanded target. These include:

- The Family Start programme to get better outcomes for families and children, and to increase the focus on child abuse detection and prevention
- An 'educational assist' package to make it easier and faster for teachers to communicate their concerns to the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki
- Social workers in all low-decile (decile 1-3) primary schools
- Social workers in hospitals
- The continued expansion of the boundaries of Children's Teams, which have been established in 10 locations, and have accepted more than 3,000 children
- A child protection alert system to show frontline health workers previous concerns about a child, using a 'flag' system to place an alert on the national health index identifier.

Working together to achieve this Result

Actions to reduce the number of children experiencing physical and sexual abuse will be at the centre of a major programme of work within the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki, with a greater focus on prevention and early and intensive interventions.

The Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki will lead and be ultimately responsible for achieving the target, but will need cooperation and support from Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development, as well as Police and Corrections.

The Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki will also require active support and feedback from families, communities and iwi to better design and deliver services and support that work.

Action areas

There is no single way to address this target. Actions will need to be taken across a number of areas, with the main focus on:

- Reducing sexual violence towards children and young people
- Reducing family violence directed at, or in the presence of children and young people
- Reducing physical violence towards children and young people
- Improving parenting skills
- Improving sexuality education and promoting healthy practices
- Addressing parental mental health and addiction.

Priority actions

- Putting a child's long-term outcomes at the centre of everything we do
- Improving assessment of needs by multi-disciplinary teams from Health, Education and the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki

- Greater communication and coordination between government agencies
- Providing drug and alcohol treatment, and building parenting skills for parents who are in prison
- Promoting sexual health and reducing sexual assaults
- Meeting the needs of parents with mental health and addiction problems.

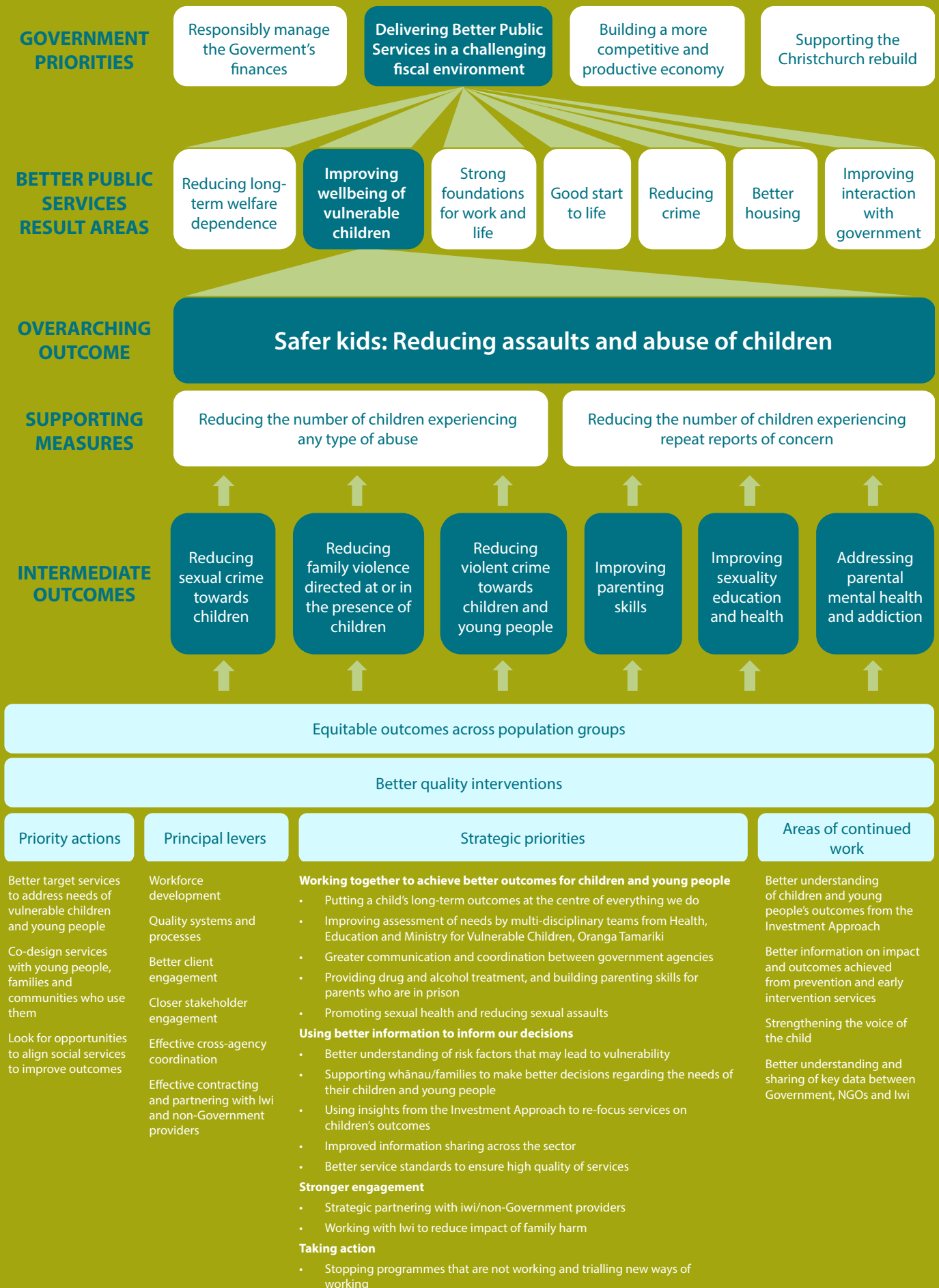
Continuous improvement, including using better information to improve our decisions

- Stopping programmes that are not working and trialling new ways of working
- Better understanding of risk factors that may lead to vulnerability
- Supporting whānau/families to make better decisions regarding the needs of their children and young people
- Using insights from the Investment Approach to re-focus services on children's outcomes
- Improved information sharing across the sector
- Better service standards to ensure high quality of services.

Stronger engagement

- Strategic partnering with iwi/non-Government providers
- Working with iwi to reduce impact of family harm.

BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES RESULT 4



Measuring success

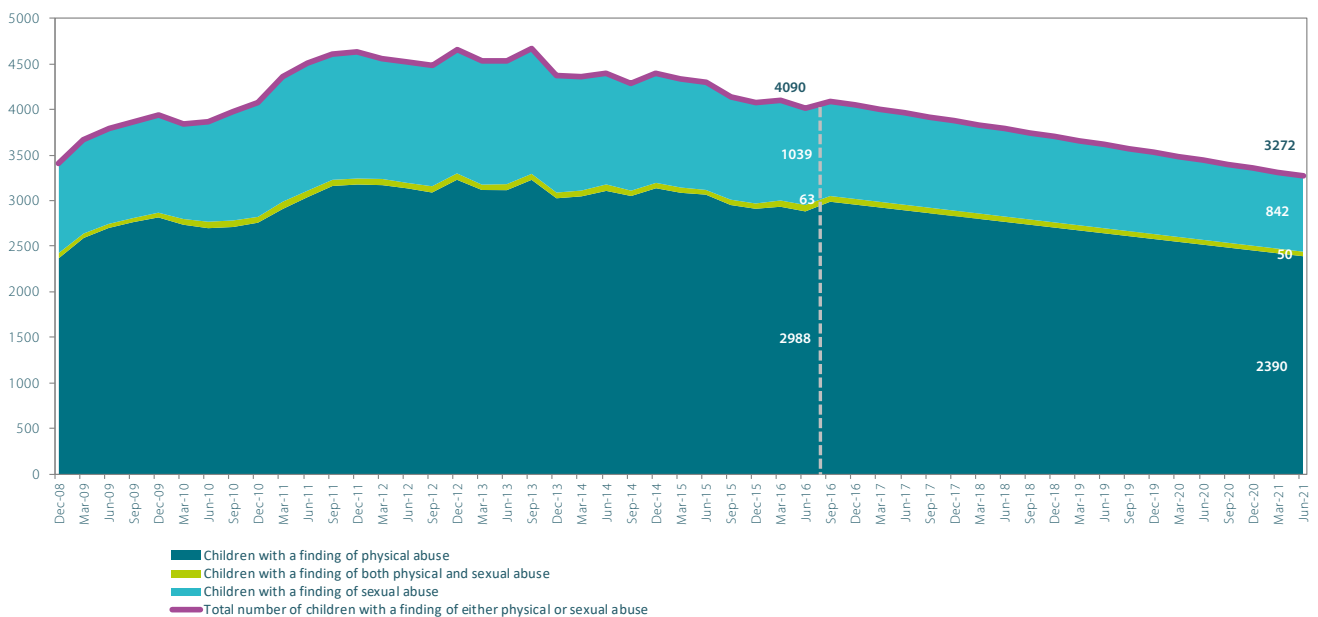
The target for reducing the number of children and young people experiencing assaults and sexual abuse is ambitious. It will mean reducing the number of children experiencing physical and sexual abuse by 800.

Performance against the target will be measured using Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki data on substantiated physical and sexual abuse. However, the data has some limitations. For example, the target only covers cases of physical and sexual abuse that have been reported to the Ministry – some assaults and instances of sexual abuse against children and young people are not reported.

In addition to the target measure, we will also be tracking two supporting measures. These measures also have data limitations.

Raising the age of care to 18 is likely to increase the number of reported assaults and sexual abuse, as more children and young people will be covered by the measure. The numbers will also be affected by changes in the practice of government agencies.

Number of children who experience physical or sexual abuse

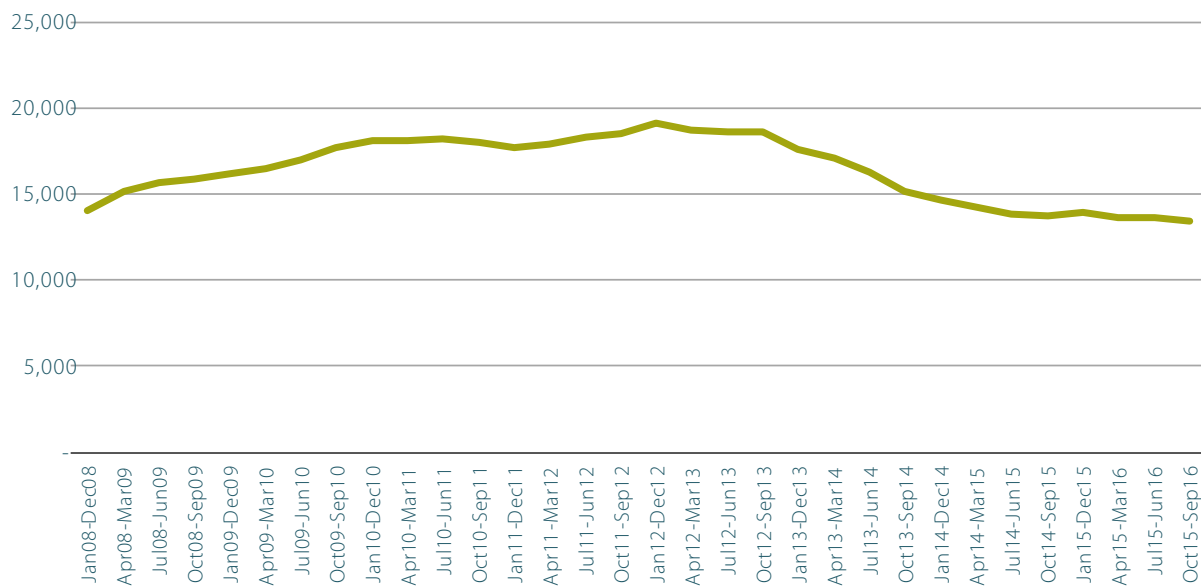


Source: Child, Youth and Family / Ministry of Social Development official data

Children experiencing any type of abuse, including emotional abuse and neglect

The main target measure will be supported by measuring the total number of children experiencing abuse of any type, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. This will ensure that we have a wide view of the safety of children and young people, and how well we are meeting their needs and addressing harm.

Number of children who experience any type of abuse (including emotional abuse and neglect)



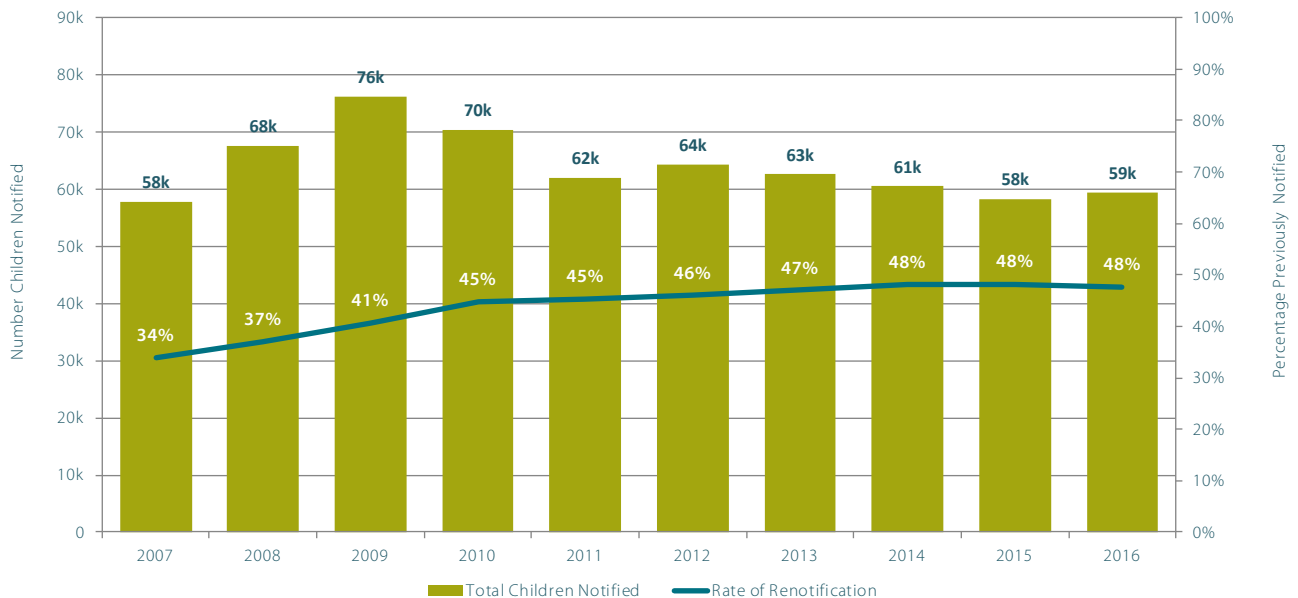
Source: Child, Youth and Family / Ministry of Social Development official data

Children experiencing a repeat Report of Concern within 12 months

The main target measure will also be supported by measuring and reporting the percentage of children who experience a repeat Report of Concern within 12 months. This will act as an indicator of how well the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki and the wider children's system:

- Identifies risk factors and needs of vulnerable children and young people
- Determines which services and support would best address the needs of children and young people
- Delivers services and support to address the needs of children and young people
- Supports children and young people in their transition into independence
- Coordinates follow up support across other government agencies and non-government partners to prevent future vulnerability.

Number of total children notified to the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki and percentage that are repeat notifications



Source: Child, Youth and Family / Ministry of Social Development official data

Future developments

We intend to improve the BPS Result 4 target by broadening it to better reflect the focus on improving the lifetime wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people. The target will be informed by the development of an actuarial model for vulnerable children. Insights from this work will be significant and will help us direct our resources towards services and support that lead to better long term outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

Supporting measures will be established to give a balanced view of outcomes of children and young people, which among others will include:

- Physical and psychological safety
- Stability of relationships and living arrangements
- Security of living arrangements and access to services and support
- Physical and mental wellbeing
- Physical, educational and cultural development.

These measures will be developed using the insights that will emerge from the actuarial model for vulnerable children as part of the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki's Investment Approach.

The Vulnerable Children's Board will oversee the work programme to address this target and will publish a more detailed Vulnerable Children's plan by the end of 2017.

