



ARE you open?

Accessible, Responsive and Effective State Services

*A study in three regions
2007*

Acknowledgements

The State Services Commission would like to thank those New Zealanders who took part in our research and who have willingly made it possible for us to share their experiences and views. We also thank the agencies involved in the research.

It is courageous to ask people “what’s your experience?” – inevitably the news will not all be good – but without asking that question State Services will be less accessible, responsive and effective than they should be. Looking at State Services from the perspective of the service user (the ‘outside-in’), rather than the vantage point of the agency (the ‘inside-out’) and then making improvements based on those insights is what the Accessible State Services goal is all about.

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Introduction

In 2006, the State Services Commission (SSC) carried out a research pilot in Rotorua to gain an understanding about the state of access to State Services in one area of New Zealand. The research pilot was primarily undertaken to obtain information for the *State of the Development Goals Report 2006*. Undertaken as a ‘launch and learn’ exercise, the pilot confirmed the effectiveness of the SSC’s research method and informed the design for the next phase.

To inform the *State of the Development Goals Report 2007*¹, the research was rolled out in three locations – Waitakere City, Taranaki and Christchurch City – during February and March 2007. These locations were selected to provide a range of urban and rural as well as high and low deprivation areas. They also included a large metropolitan city, in both the North and South Islands.

The 2006 report focused primarily on the Accessible State Services Goal. The goal sits within the wider Development Goals and is focused on improving New Zealanders’ experience of State Services. The research outlined in this report is in relation to both the Accessible State Services and Networked State Services goals. Together, the two goals aim to provide seamless, convenient and user-friendly services by means of increased collaboration between State Services and the use of information and communication technologies, along with strategies to incorporate service users’ and non-users’ experiences and expectations into service design and implementation.

This research involved close collaboration between the SSC and UMR researchers conducting two complementary research phases. In the first phase, UMR undertook in-depth interviews to obtain peoples’ perceptions and experiences about their recent interactions with State Services. This is the ‘outside-in’ perspective of the State Services. Twenty-four case studies, covering a range of ‘life experiences’ and concentrating on users of multiple State Services, were undertaken in the three locations. UMR fed the results of these interviews back to the SSC research team².

The SSC team interviewed staff of the State agencies that had been identified by the service users in the UMR research, to gain an ‘inside-out’ perspective of how agencies make their services available to people. Interviews were held in the three locations with 23 State Services agencies, including district health boards (DHBs), five territorial local authorities and 18 social and business intermediaries or community organisations.

This report presents a summary of the responses provided to the research teams. The responses present a range of views on the extent to which New Zealanders are able to access services in Waitakere, Taranaki and Christchurch.

The report is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on Accessible State Services. This is concerned with how services are made available, both in terms of physical location and online accessibility, and the implications of this for service users.

¹ www.ssc.govt.nz/sdg-report07

² www.ssc.govt.nz/case-studies-access-goal07

The second section looks at Responsive State Services. This includes how well service users are treated and how well their specific requirements are met by agencies.

The third section considers the effectiveness of State Services. This is concerned with the extent to which agencies capture users' experiences and expectations to improve service design and delivery. Finally, the report summarises agencies' thoughts on how State Services could be improved.

Section 1

Accessible State Services

Who's [not] knocking at the door?

For some agencies, eligibility for services and prioritisation is determined by policy and/or legislation. For example, changes to the Legal Service Act (2000) have increased eligibility to legal aid. However, despite being eligible, some groups are commonly recognised by agencies as being under-users of services. These include Māori and Pacific groups, refugees and migrants³, and people with experience of mental health problems.

Agencies use various ways of identifying user groups and patterns of engagement. Some undertake formal planning processes. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) carries out a local services mapping project in consultation with local councils and key stakeholders to identify gaps in service delivery. Housing New Zealand Corporation's (HNZC's) regional planning process identifies areas of focus for the region. Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) also prepares regional plans that identify areas of focus or need. District health boards (DHBs) undertake Health Needs Assessments every three years looking at what services are available and the health state of the community. For example, in Christchurch, they know that those with severe mental health issues are 3% of the population but not everyone with serious mental health issues is accessing care.

Agencies establish relationships and consult with social service providers and community organisations to remain informed and ensure that they are actively seen in the community. Work and Income staff work out of sites such as the Salvation Army or Methodist Mission to identify non-users. The Child Youth and Family's contract and funding team and community liaison advisors all work out in the community and can identify unmet needs and gaps in services, and feed back what they are hearing. HNZC in Christchurch has staff working out in rural communities who are able to hear about high needs cases that they might not necessarily have heard about, for example, people living in caravans or barns.

Inter-agency collaboration, communication and data sharing are important means for agencies to identify priority areas and gaps. For HNZC, the Christchurch Housing Forum, which includes non government organisations (NGOs) and State Services agencies, is a good place to hear what is going on and to share information. The Department of Labour (DoL) and Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) are able to match business data under the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (2001). This enables DoL to compare patterns of engagement, that is, those it is engaging with against those it is not. The joint promotional work undertaken by Inland Revenue and MSD identified people who qualify but are not receiving Working for Families assistance.

Surveys, whether undertaken by agencies or others, and research also inform agencies about who is not accessing services. For example, national victimisation surveys show the Police that there is under-reporting of family violence and sexual offending. Sexual offending in particular is a hidden crime. Groups presenting late and with more complex health needs inform the DHBs of those who are not accessing services early enough. ACC conducts research to keep abreast of groups who access schemes to a lesser extent than others, for example, Māori, Pacific people, Asians and, to some extent, the elderly.

³ Refugees in particular and those admitted under the family reunification criteria, rather than skilled migrants. An emerging group in some areas is the Somali community.

Agencies with a regulatory, compliance or enforcement role, such as DoL, Inland Revenue, Ministry of Economic Development (MED), Child Youth and Family, or New Zealand Customs Service (Customs) noted that people are compelled to go to them. For example, those who want to incorporate a company or form a society have to go to the Companies Office. Customs explained that people cannot get clearance for imports/exports unless they approach its service. For these agencies, service provision is a matter of ensuring that people are fulfilling their obligations and therefore it is still necessary for these agencies to know who is not ‘accessing’ their services. As an example, Inland Revenue can identify through returned mail when people are trying to avoid fulfilling their financial obligations. Child Youth and Family receives notifications from schools, health providers, police, family, friends and NGOs.

Being informed about the extent of non-users has enabled some agencies to target particular groups. ACC held a series of 25 hui and meetings with Māori, Asian and Pacific Island communities to provide information around services and ask about low engagement. This has led to the development of access strategies. Archives New Zealand (Archives) in Christchurch is currently working with Ngāi Tahu around archiving their information and has programmes in place to attract tertiary students and year 12 and 13 secondary students. HNZN ensures that high risk groups, such as people with experience of mental illness, receive high priority.

Is the door open?

While some agencies think the door is open for those entitled to their services, others identified barriers. There are various ways, both formal and informal, for agencies to find out what the barriers are to their services. For instance, the Ministry of Education (MoE) knows that its website is not user-friendly because people tell the Ministry. Some agencies receive feedback through their websites, emails and letters. Community consultation, which includes non-government organisations, through public meetings, external forums and networks enables some agencies to hear concerns and remain informed about gaps in, and barriers to, accessing services. Customs can track all transactions on Cusmod, their electronic transaction system, which allows it to identify barriers to access.

Agencies also draw on surveys and research to find out about barriers to their services. For example, ACC has undertaken research that shows people know what ‘ACC’ stands for but do not know what their entitlements are. The Canterbury DHB looks to national and international research in a range of areas, including treatments for particular conditions, and to understand barriers to access. The CCS offers its services to undertake “barrier free” audits. It has just completed a report looking at physical accessibility to ACC offices in the South Island.

Geographic isolation and distance

In Taranaki and Christchurch, in particular, both agencies and intermediaries noted that for some groups, rural isolation can be a barrier. This means that some people have to travel large distances to access services. For example, one intermediary in Hawera explained that members of this community have to travel to Wanganui or New Plymouth for some services. Finding transport can be difficult, especially for the most disadvantaged. HNZN found that it was difficult for customers from Rangiora to get to the Papanui neighbourhood unit.

However, lack of transport does not just affect rural communities. People in Waitakere have to travel to Auckland City for Environment Court hearings. Critical mass and clinical safety issues mean that some specialist healthcare services cannot safely or economically be provided at all facilities resulting in some people having to travel from West Auckland to the North Shore or Auckland City to receive specialist care. Waitakere City Council noted that people

who live in Massey, and have no car, but have to get to services in Henderson, are disadvantaged because public transport is not good. Stratford District Council highlighted that no public transport service (other than taxi) operates between Stratford and New Plymouth at convenient hours.

Women's Refuge in Christchurch gave the example of a woman having to travel by bus with three children for an appointment with a State Service but, once there, not getting what she needed. She did not have the energy to come back and see them all over again. Age Concern explained that for the elderly with limited mobility and/or transport, it can be particularly frustrating if they have to travel on different days or to different places on one day for appointments. Even when people do have their own transport, the lack or cost of parking was frequently mentioned as a barrier.

The difficulty of having no transport is compounded for people without access to a phone or who cannot afford toll calls. Some agencies do not have an 0800 number or the 0800 number does not accept calls from cell phones.

Archives explained that not living in the area can be a barrier to people accessing its services. There is no inter-lending and clients outside of Christchurch generally need to pay for most research services. Although, it noted, paying for the service does not seem to have stopped people from using it.

Financial costs

Other financial costs can be a barrier, including part charges for health care. ACC explained that part charges for ACC treatment can have implications for lower-socio economic groups. Similarly, going to a GP, even if part of a Primary Health Organisation (PHO), can incur costs. PHOs receive funding to improve access to primary health care for those not accessing services due to cost. However, often people who cannot afford a GP are using the emergency services, which in turn increases pressure on those services. As a spokesperson from Waitakere Hospital explained, "people who are time-rich, money-poor" will wait all day to be seen.

Agencies and intermediaries commented that financial costs for lawyers and legal proceedings can be another barrier, especially if people are ineligible for legal aid. Although eligibility has been increased through amendments to the Legal Services Act (2000), intermediaries identified that some people are still facing difficulties. For example, women ineligible for legal aid and wanting the aid of a lawyer to obtain protection orders have to pay the full cost. The Family Court in Christchurch identified that people are growing in confidence and are prepared to represent themselves so they do not have to pay the lawyer's costs. They also noted that some lawyers are choosing not to take on clients who are receiving legal aid funding because there is a risk that the lawyers will not be paid the full amount of lawyers' fees.

Other legal processes that incur costs can also present barriers, for example, the cost of the resource consent process, participating in the Treaty of Waitangi claim settlement process and the cost incurred in paying for cases that are lost or in making appeals to the Environment Court.

Channels

Channels may present barriers to access and one agency stated that it was not clear what channels people may want to access its services. Some agencies and intermediaries identified that agencies need to take into account people's lack of access to computers and the Internet if they are moving to making their services accessible through the Internet. For some people, it

might be an issue of no broadband, slow downloads or Internet, while for others, not being able to afford a computer. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) noted that most of its reports are available on the web and very little is available in hard copy form. MSD acknowledged that jobsites like 'Seek' are not available to those without Internet access.

Some agencies drew attention to the digital divide in skills and access. For example, TPK in Taranaki explained that within the Māori community a digital divide exists. Only some iwi or hapū can rely on key technologically capable individuals to establish websites and databases to facilitate effective communication and participation (both within their iwi and with government). Other issues for iwi can be the ongoing costs associated with technology, including training.

While, for some people, lack of access to phones and the Internet is a barrier, others found not having services on the Internet disruptive, especially if the opening hours are also inconvenient. "It's a real pain having to go all the way, right into town, paying \$7 and getting it, but if you are not there by 3 o'clock, you can't get it" (Christchurch, RMA Consent Process, male).

Many people found automated phone systems challenging. Two intermediaries in Taranaki reported that for older people, the automated phone system is complicated and can be difficult to understand. Others found the circuit of electronic messages confusing. One intermediary wondered if phone systems were difficult to interpret because they are designed by specialists who know their services inside-out and not with outsiders in mind. Another intermediary in Christchurch went so far as to say they are a lazy system, which means government agencies do not have to deal with the public in person.

Lack of awareness

Accessibility can be a matter of awareness. This includes awareness that a service exists, what people's entitlements are and which agency provides which service. For example, Career Services acknowledged that some people's awareness of its services and the help it can provide around career advice is relatively low. HNZC noted that it is seen as a family-based service and not for single people. This is partly due to the types of houses that are portrayed in the media, for example, three-bedroom housing.

There is often confusion over the roles of agencies, for instance, between the Department of Building and Housing and HNZC. MAF noted that some people do not realise that Fisheries is now its own ministry. Even agency staff lack full awareness of available services, which undermines user referrals to appropriate services.

Other agencies and intermediaries thought that there is not enough information for users, or it is fragmented or not provided in a timely manner. One intermediary in Christchurch said that it is "hard to get the big picture," while the South Taranaki District Council commented that there is no "menu" of government services. On the other hand, some intermediaries thought that too much promotional material led to information overload (both for themselves and users).

The Department of Building and Housing in Waitakere thought that there was a lack of information provided around services before dispute resolution was needed. It was working with, and through, other agencies and intermediaries, training their staff and providing display information for use in their offices. By raising awareness with those groups, the opportunity

exists to get consistent messages to customers about their rights and responsibilities and to urge people to act before a situation has deteriorated.

Some agencies and intermediaries reported that people's capabilities and skills can affect their access to services. Those with low confidence, low literacy levels or who are inarticulate are more likely to have trouble making themselves understood or asking for help. These are the ones who are more likely to need the help of intermediaries. Mental Health Services in Christchurch explained that people with mental illness or depression sometimes do not even know that they need help.

Language and culture

Language and cultural factors were also identified as barriers and these can lie both with agencies and people themselves. For example, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) often receives enquiries and approaches from individuals for whom English is not their first language. The Canterbury DHB found that there is a high demand for interpreter services because of the growing Asian population in Canterbury. Immigration New Zealand (Immigration) acknowledged that its forms and information pamphlets are written for people who speak English.

“Actually, I don't know exactly where and how I can find that information ... You just search on Internet they've got their own website ... have to read some part of them I can't understand ... I think language barrier is the big problem, yes”. (Waitakere, international tertiary student, female)

The Special Education grouping of the Ministry of Education (GSE) explained that language needs to be practical and user-friendly.

Agencies identified that Māori and Pacific people do not always feel comfortable accessing their services because they find government agencies culturally unfriendly. One group described them as “very European and government departmentish” and off-putting. One intermediary in Taranaki considered that some Māori people are private and prefer to turn to family for support. Or, as TPK explained, they rely on key individuals, but these support people are thinly spread and provide merely a voluntary effort.

GSE in Christchurch thought that Māori and Pacific people find it hard to access services because there is a growing suspicion and wariness of government services. This is common to many people from non-European cultural backgrounds. A variety of intermediaries in all three regions commented that many new migrants fear interactions with authority after experiencing bribery and corruption in their own countries, so they do not trust the Police or bureaucrats here. These historical experiences and people's perceptions can be influential for migrants and refugees as often their first source of information is the stories in their own communities.

Another cultural barrier is lack of understanding of how things work in New Zealand or different expectations and approaches. As an example, MED noted that immigrants from Australia and England expect different structures than exist in New Zealand or expect the process to be a lot more complex than it is. MAF in Auckland explained that asylum seekers and migrants often do not know what information they need when entering the country or what the processes are once they are here. This can result, for example, in having a full search of their belongings, which can be difficult for them.

There are also different cultural attitudes to health. For example, the Canterbury DHB commented that while there is increasing concern about obesity, in some cultures obesity is a sign of affluence and prestige rather than an issue of health care. Mental Health Services gave the example of how in mental health, Māori are 6.7% of the population and 13% of those who access care, while Asians are 10% of the population and only 1.1% of those who access it. “Either the Asian population is much healthier, or they are not accessing services”.

Fear of interaction with government is not confined to ethnic minorities. Agencies and intermediaries identified that many people find it difficult to deal with authority, being “fearful and mistrusting of people who wear suits and don’t understand where they are coming from”. Child Youth and Family in both Taranaki and Waitakere described how there was a common perception and fear that Child Youth and Family will “take your children away from you”.

One intermediary in Waitakere explained that some women were reluctant to apply for a protection order because of a perception that they will not be kept safe. A protection order was seen as “just a piece of paper”, leaving them still prone to attack and the Police seen as either unable or unwilling to act. Another intermediary in Waitakere described how the protection order might be breached,

“... for example by the man texting his partner, but because it is low level Police might not enforce the order, [as they] don't have the resources to act on low level breaches. So women do not report all breaches and it sends a message to the abuser that it is ok to breach protection orders. Often will escalate from there”.

One respondent’s ex-partner was able to breach a protection order by phoning her from remand. On reporting it to the Police, she found that she had to instruct them to take action.

“After he threatened me I went to the Police station to place a complaint and the officer said to me, ‘What do you want us to do?’ And if I had gone, ‘Oh nothing’ and walked out, they wouldn’t have done anything. But because I knew they had to do something I stayed there and made them understand and I told them, ‘I want you to do a report. I want you to note that he has breached his protection orders’. And then they did something about it”. (Waitakere, protection order, female)

On the other hand, the Police drew attention to a long held and “unrealistic” perception that police officers are “on tap” or are able to help people out almost informally. People want to see officers on the beat which is sometimes difficult to do, “they don’t realise the work that goes into getting police officers to a crime scene”.

“We have to manage the reality of demand; provide a service but not meet what are sometimes unrealistic expectations. If not managed effectively the danger is that it will lead to a fear of crime in our community”.

For example, there was a perception that Police placed too high a priority on road policing. As one intermediary put it, the “Police are less responsive to crime, focusing more on transport offences ... rather than dealing with crims they send cops to catch farmers doing 120 on local roads”.

Other people may not be accessing services because: they are independent and used to helping themselves; they do not think they need help; there is a stigma attached to certain agencies and with asking for help; or they simply choose not to. One respondent in Christchurch stated,

“I reluctantly walked into ACC. I had no option but to walk in there ... I was off work. I could see it was possibly going to be a long time from what the doctor had said and I

needed that possibly if I was going to have to employ someone to keep the farm going ... I'm not a person who wants handouts, who accepts handouts". (Christchurch, self-employed with injury, male)

Inland Revenue noted that people often do not let it know of changes in address to avoid financial obligations.

Lack of services

Another barrier highlighted by users, intermediaries and agencies is the lack of services, particularly in the health and education sectors. One intermediary in Taranaki stated that shutting schools is hurting their communities, although a couple of agencies noted that while students do have to travel further now, they are receiving a higher quality standard of education.

Both agencies and intermediaries in Christchurch identified that for children with special needs, there is a lack of specialist paediatric services and special needs services are not available in all schools. One intermediary commented that as the early childhood education sector is non-compulsory they do not have to provide special education services and some people in the sector say they do not have enough resources to provide these services.

Intermediaries in Waitakere considered that mental health and housing services are not keeping up with the increase in refugees. In addition, Waitakere Hospital only offers elective surgery; acute surgery is not available. Waitakere Hospital also reported that having the emergency care centre open only from 8am to 10pm is a barrier. It does not have the capacity to be open longer but there is a big influx between 9pm and 10pm and the last people are not leaving until 1am-2am. Other agencies also noted that their opening hours or after-hours coverage do not always meet people's needs.

Some intermediaries drew attention to inconsistencies in support for people with a disability. For example, differences in benefits for people born with a disability as opposed to a disability resulting from an accident. With the former, there is more opportunity for funding. "Totally chalk and cheese. We advocate that there should be no differences".

There also appeared to be regional differences in the package of entitlements that people are able to receive based on care assessments.

Quality of service – processes

Agencies, intermediaries and users noted that the complexity of processes can make accessing services difficult without the help of competent agency staff, a lawyer or some other advocate.

"There is the complexity of the benefit process. This is just too hard. This seems to go against the Government's attention. Very complicated around benefits and entitlements. If you hit a good WI office and person it's ok, if you don't, it's a minefield". (Taranaki, Grandmother caring for grandchildren)

"We've actually found we have to have more and more pieces of paper so initially it was something we hadn't done before and it was a bit of a challenge getting all our ducks in a row and getting the appropriate information down on paper, filling out the right forms, getting the neighbours to sign their consent forms, etc. It seemed to be a lot of work, a lot of running around". (Christchurch, RMA consent process, male)

“I would say that [ACC] have the most complicated account forms I’ve ever seen in the world. It ends up that I have to ring every time and ask them what I actually owe them. You cannot understand their invoice or statement at all”. (Christchurch, exporter, female)

Business people often found the process of obtaining grants so complicated that it was either not worth the effort to do it or they hired agents to help them. Complying with requirements also cost both money and time so some business people would often not bother. Agencies’ failure to meet statutory and appropriate timeframes was another barrier for business people. “It can take weeks and weeks before you get the money back ... It’s a cash flow thing, and small businesses do need [the money]” (Christchurch, exporter, female). A couple of business intermediaries also commented on the restructuring of government departments. “Business people suffer from perpetual restructuring, they want consistency”. Restructuring was seen by some as an excuse for reduced services.

Other business people felt that their business needs were not understood by government departments. They want stable systems, processes and people that understand and talk the language of businesses. Some business intermediaries also felt that if there is an economic transformation agenda, then government agencies also had to be transformational in attitude.

Quality of service – staff

Many people observed that the quality of service users received depended on the calibre of staff members and that it varied between agencies and often even within agencies. Some staff were seen as unwelcoming, unhelpful, insensitive and judgemental.

“I felt like I was treated as scum. I just felt that the woman I was dealing with in there, I was just another number, I was a bludger. She was arrogant”. (Christchurch, self-employed with injury, male)

Respondents and intermediaries also reported that staff in some agencies were not forthcoming with information about people’s entitlements.

“It’s a system that’s rigidly structured, they only give you the information they have to ... if you need to go beyond that, get an advocate”. (Taranaki, Grandmother caring for grandchildren)

Intermediaries noted that with some staff there seemed to be an assumption that people had nothing else better to do but wait around. Inland Revenue in Taranaki acknowledged that some clients were not aware that appointments could be made because it was not advertised and they could be waiting in line for up to two hours. Even when appointments had been made with other agencies, clients often found themselves waiting for staff.

Some agencies and intermediaries attributed staff attitudes to overworked staff who were often untrained, with limited skills and knowledge of their own services. High staff turnover resulted in the loss of experienced staff and created further pressure on remaining staff.

The Police recognised that their officers’ own behaviour can sometimes be a barrier to access. Their priorities are often different from the community’s. “So when there is a murder for example, some Police want to concentrate just on that and stop functioning. They are not interested in the lower level things and this can affect the way people are treated”. One senior Police officer thought that the under-reporting of crimes could be due to how people are dealt

with. “When a woman comes in to report family violence [he does not want her to get a response such as] sure you are going to go through with this?”⁴.

Some agencies and intermediaries observed that one bad experience affects how all government departments are perceived. If the last experience was bad it can result in an escalating lack of trust. As the Police acknowledged, “One failure undermines people’s confidence”. One intermediary explained that government departments need to look at rebuilding trust with the community. “[They] need to look at the people they employ, [which] will improve the services, which will build trust”.

Physical accessibility and design

Physical accessibility and building design were seen by agencies and intermediaries as another barrier, in particular for people with disabilities and families with strollers. Even when a building’s design is in keeping with the national standard, some agencies reported that the environment could be seen as sterile, unwelcoming or daunting. The Police in both Waitakere and Taranaki noted that the current design of their reception area can be intimidating; people reporting a crime are put off by those lining up alongside to be processed for a crime. Intermediaries commented that open plan offices with no privacy can be off-putting for clients who are uncomfortable with telling their stories in an open environment.

A lack of facilities for children is also not user-friendly. ACC in Taranaki mentioned that it was making some improvements by having toys in the reception area.

Some agencies also mentioned that poor or lack of signage can undermine accessibility.

Intermediaries

A theme that has come through the research is the importance that intermediaries play in helping people to access services. This includes the full range from the very vulnerable to confident business people. In most cases, people are going to agencies, not getting what they need or having a negative experience then going to intermediaries, such as Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) or Community Law Centres. In some instances, they are being referred to the intermediaries by the agencies. Intermediaries commented that they often have a calming effect on users and/or the situation because they are objective and not personally involved. Agencies are seen as cold in their approach, time-driven and output focused. Intermediaries felt that agency staff could learn from them. Because of their effectiveness, a plea was made for more resourcing for intermediaries and other NGOs to enable them to cope with the complexities and changing nature of communities and be able to provide services for everyone who needs them.

⁴ See p 8, the response to one respondent reporting a breach of a protection order, i.e. “What do you want us to do?”

Promoting awareness

Agencies produce a range of materials to promote awareness of their services, including people's entitlements and obligations. These include brochures, pamphlets, posters and information packs. For example, Customs produce a brochure called 'Frontline' to advertise their business partnership programme. The programme asks businesses to sign up to helping protect New Zealand from prohibited imports.

Immigration New Zealand provides new residents with a package of information about life in New Zealand including schools, culture, housing and climate. It also has a package called KIT (keeping in touch) that is targeted at those wanting to settle in New Zealand. The information pack incorporates a section devoted to tax matters, including the different tax types and information on business tax⁵. One respondent found the information provided useful but thought it would have been helpful to have included more information around the tax brackets, the importance of paying tax and what it is used for (Christchurch, returning OE, male). Inland Revenue commented that the pack advises how new residents can contact it to seek further assistance. New migrants also have the ability to speak with an Inland Revenue migrant liaison officer.

Agencies make their material available in a variety of languages and ways. For example, they display material in key locations. GSE distributes pamphlets and posters to GPs and schools. DHBs also make information available in GPs' waiting rooms. Others provide information through the public libraries or through intermediaries. One intermediary explained how they had to carry agencies' promotion material in their foyer but he did not find it particularly inspiring. Others were concerned about information overload, that is, having to carry too many brochures. However, one intermediary commented that GSE was good at explaining their information and appreciated the pamphlets provided.

A number of agencies send out regular newsletters or publications to stakeholders, either hard copy or electronically. These agencies maintain databases of their stakeholders for this purpose. For example, the Office of Treaty Settlements (OTS) has a database of claimants that is used for mail-outs of its quarterly reports and to advise on any changes in processes.

Many agencies promote awareness through their websites. A number noted how the website was an important tool for disseminating information and were looking to revamp or improve their websites. Inland Revenue reported that it has a high quality website that has a significant amount of information on it. It was judged the best website for government and community in the Netguide web awards in 2006.

The community served by Waitakere Hospital is to benefit from the setting up of Health Point, a web-based information directory describing the health services available to it. The hospital staff commented it is easier to maintain and update a web-based directory than A-Z hard copy directories "which are practically obsolete by time of print". Archives noted that it has started web exhibitions because people were not turning up for the traditional ones and schools, for example, were experiencing difficulties in sending groups to visit. Archives maintained that its resources lend themselves to digitisation and access on-line.

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) in Christchurch explained that it uses its website to promote awareness of its office locations, information on application forms and processes as well as providing guidance on these. One respondent noted that the DIA website was helpful

⁵ <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/settlementpack/Business/BusinessTax/>

and had a lot of detailed information about the citizenship application process, but did not appear to have online application forms (Christchurch, returning OE, male).

DoL explained that it encourages people to use its website as it is “more than an on-line brochure”. Instead, it can provide regular updates of guidance material; offers people the ability to lodge questions and receive online answers; and the “self help tools enable users to navigate, interact and actively meet their own specific needs”. The agency’s aim is to “self empower but to ensure that people fulfil their obligations”. However, one intermediary thought asking a question about employment on the DoL website was confusing. On the other hand, they thought Immigration’s website was “brilliant”. Inland Revenue thought it could probably do more to promote the option of using its website.

A number of agencies have undertaken extensive information campaigns to raise awareness, using a variety of media. For instance, ACC is conducting a television and radio campaign called ‘Are you covered?’. The campaign has started broadly, with a focus on the 24/7 accessibility of their support. As the campaign continues, it intends to get more detailed around the specific services ACC offers. The Mental Health Foundation launched the National Depression initiative to raise awareness of depression with the John Kirwan adverts on television.

MAF featured in a recent television programme called ‘Border Control’, which helped to explain what MAF actually does, and why.

Many agencies in Waitakere advertise on ethnic radio and television stations to get information out to refugees and migrants. As the Waitakere City Council noted, ethnic media has a huge audience and is a primary source of communication.

Other agencies use newspapers. The local weekly newspaper in Taranaki features a profile on one of the Police’s community staff each month. It also discusses lower level crime issues.

Some agencies are updating their promotional material and using DVDs, Video or CD ROM as their main promotional tool. The Family Court in Christchurch explained that DVDs were cheaper to produce than brochures.

There is also the standard telephone book and directory (both electronic and paper) although the Northern DHB Support Agency (NDSA)⁶ identified that the telephone book is not particularly helpful in relation to mental health services.

Agencies also promote awareness through fieldwork and engaging with the community. This includes expos, seminars, conferences, presentations, road shows, fairs and galas, and open days. For example, at a three day home expo in Taranaki, HNZC had a stand to advertise its services and initiatives such as home ownership and healthy homes. HNZC also run tutorials on home ownership that included advice on where to start, mortgages and budgeting. MSD advised of situations where someone applying for a benefit will be invited to a seminar that provides them with an information pack and a menu of all the services available. Several agencies commented that seminars have the benefit of reaching more people in a quicker time frame.

⁶ The NDSA is a shared services agency joint venture owned by the three Auckland Metro DHBs (Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata) in their roles as health and disability service funders. The Mental Health Team provides organisational support around the funding and planning of mental health services to the Northern Regional DHBs.

Child Youth and Family has developed the Everyday Communities programme to raise public awareness and prevent family violence, child abuse and neglect. The programme was developed in 2001 and launched in Waitakere in April 2007. The agency works with other government agencies and non-government community groups, iwi and hapū to deliver a programme unique to every community. Everyday Communities is supported by Everyday Gear, including stationery items, stickers, balloons, drink bottles, T-shirts and hats designed to communicate messages in various languages about prevention of abuse and ways to promote child and family wellbeing. Child Youth and Family has received good feedback on the Everyday Communities and noted that the balloons for children have been a great success.

Participation at fairs and galas, children's days and festivals are another mechanism. Work and Income stands have been observed at fairs by a number of intermediaries. One intermediary commented that there seems to be a cultural shift at Work and Income, they are out there "looking for reasons to give people a service now". TPK sponsors whānau day outs where the community can learn what TPK and other agencies do.

Some agencies undertake road shows to raise awareness. Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) conducted a series of road shows when it changed to providing its services electronically.

Waitakere Hospital held open days and community tours to explain what services were offered when the hospital was opening. The hospital collaborated with the Waitakere City Council and Settlement Support to ensure that migrants were included in these open days.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) remarked that the purpose of its visitor centres, signage and interpretative displays on tracks are to raise awareness and provide information.

Agencies connect to communities through churches, schools, marae, clubs and sporting groups, community forums and lunches, and malls. For example, Inland Revenue approaches schools to reach groups in rural areas. It noted that it usually gets good turnouts for these types of events.

Several agencies noted that having staff out in the field meant that word-of-mouth was another way for people to find out about their services. The Police have a visibility policy of "getting the staff out there". Officers at all levels of the organisation have to meet a set number of hours of being out and engaging with the community. The District Commander, Waitematā, explained that even he goes on the beat every two weeks.

The Waitakere City Council also commented that people who work in Waitakere tend to live there as well, which helps to raise awareness in the community.

Other agencies use the "players in their communities" to promote awareness. For example, agencies that work with businesses, establish partnerships with employers' and industry associations to ensure good quality information and guidance is available. This is especially important for those agencies that do not advertise, such as the Companies Office. Instead, the Companies Office relies on its strong networks, like the Law Society or Institute of Accountants to "spread the word".

Inland Revenue reported that since October 2006, it has engaged with 800 of New Zealand's largest employers to pass on information to their staff about family assistance, child support and paid parental leave. DOC connects through recreation and tramping clubs. The DHBs found that the best way for health promotion is through other health professionals, that is, GPs,

PHOs, nurses, and social workers. Both intermediaries and agencies identified that agencies filter information through intermediaries like CAB and electoral offices.

Cross-agency interaction is another way in which agencies promote their services. For example, Inland Revenue works with MSD to promote Working for Families Tax Credits. As MSD noted, “If other agencies have better knowledge of MSD, then people can be put onto them sooner”. The Department of Building and Housing, HNZA and Work and Income in Waitakere also work together to raise awareness about the Working for Family package. The Department of Building and Housing considered that some difficulties could be alleviated if tenants received this entitlement. These agencies are also working together to raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and landlords and what action can be taken to prevent people from getting into disputes. For example, urging tenants or landlords to contact the Department of Building and Housing before they get to a stage where a situation has deteriorated to the point that they need mediation.

Some agencies and intermediaries identified that staff skills are important for helping people understand their entitlements. MSD in Taranaki stated that case managers ensure that all the relevant information is given to the client. “This may mean that the initial issue is dealt with first and then a second meeting is arranged to go over all other relevant information”.

Customs explained that in Christchurch, the chief customs officers (team leaders) are very experienced, with 20-30 years experience each. They are also well trained in technical knowledge and therefore are able to advise the public on various topics, such as how to minimise duty tax. There is a frontline officer based in every port, whose job it is to go out and inform people about Customs’ requirements, services and processes.

A number of intermediaries wanted agency staff to take more responsibility for explaining to people about rights, benefits and processes. One maintained that often if people did not ask the right questions, they would not be told about their entitlements. Immigration commented that it is their job to confirm that the customer has asked the right questions. By better informing and educating customers, staff explained, it can cut down on questions and any delays. One intermediary has noticed that some agency staff “have shown improvement over time”.

One agency acknowledged that due to the wide range of services offered (and the size and the complexity of their organisation), it can be difficult for all staff to know what its services are, how to access these, and who to go to for more information.

ACC stated that to improve the quality and timing of entitlements, it has developed an electronic format where the claim form is sent from a patient’s doctor to ACC on the same day as the patient sees the doctor. ACC will then reply within 24-48 hours to advise on entitlements.

As well as advising people of their entitlements, staff in many agencies also advise people of their rights. Immigration in Waitakere described how staff have to remain transparent, objective and fair while processing applications quickly. “If an application is going to be declined then, in fairness, the applicant is given the opportunity to comment before an application is actually declined”. ACC have a *Code of ACC Claimants’ Rights* (2001) that requires mutual trust, respect and ethical behaviour when dealing with claimants⁷.

⁷ http://www.acc.co.nz/PRD_EXT_CSMP/groups/external_communications/documents/internet/wcm000394.pdf

Agencies also need to inform people of their obligations. ACC in Taranaki noted that it has account managers and workplace consultants to communicate with employers around obligations and rights. ACC closely tracks the performance of employers with high injury rates. A database provides statistics about those who are underachieving. According to ACC, poor performers receive regular visits and clear messages.

In March 2007, Inland Revenue introduced a new formalised outbound calling initiative for business customers. The purpose is to proactively contact business customers who are new to employing staff members in order to ensure that they are aware of their obligations, and the ways in which Inland Revenue can assist them to meet these. Between March 2007 and the end of June 2007, over 3,000 outbound calls were made to businesses new to employing staff.

HNZC runs workshops to inform people about their rights and responsibilities. For example, if people are in private accommodation, it is important that it be maintained and tenancy services can help ensure that landlords do maintain their place.

“Some tenants do not want to fix the place up as they think it will affect their chances of getting a state house but it is important they do. It’s about keeping them connected and ensuring housing works for them. It’s the tenant’s responsibility to give early warning if things aren’t working so they can look at other options”.

The biggest issue though for HNZC, was ensuring the tenants know their responsibility around income-related rent. “It’s about empowering them so they have security of tenure; they need to know their rights and obligations to us as the landlord”.

Immigration acknowledged that the Immigration Act (1987) is a “minefield” and it is the agency’s responsibility to make people aware of the Act.

To ensure customers comply with their obligations, Inland Revenue uses reminders when people have an overdue debt or when returns are late.

Views on the effectiveness of information or promotional campaigns varied. Some intermediaries thought that agencies were doing well. Others thought that agencies were not doing enough to promote awareness. Generally, agencies thought they were doing well but could do better.

Both agencies and intermediaries agreed a difficulty was that people do not want to know about agencies’ services until they are needed. One intermediary found massive information campaigns not particularly useful. Especially if, as another pointed out, people can not afford to buy newspapers. This intermediary found community newspapers more effective.

The same intermediary also suggested that when there are changes in entitlements, government agencies need to look at strategies to communicate the changes effectively. One option suggested for the over 65 age group, was to use Work and Income as a core agency to distribute information from other agencies to Work and Income’s client group. This intermediary thought there could be more collaboration between agencies, via, for example, a quarterly newspaper instead of using broadsheet newspaper advertising.

Making it easy

In order to ensure that information is easy to understand, one intermediary explained that information should be “simple, written in clear language, concise and user-friendly”.

However, a number of intermediaries identified that the information agencies provide can be complicated, difficult to understand and not user-friendly. Most agencies considered that they were doing their best to make information freely available, easy to access, accurate, timely, and simple to understand. One intermediary described the publications that the Ministry of Consumer Affairs produces as a good example. They were “simple, easy to read, do not overload information and they contain what [you] need to know”.

One agency identified that the ability to access information varied between different sections of the community and not all people were as capable as others. This agency sought to print material tailored to the needs of their community.

Some agencies considered that making information user-friendly means presenting information from the point of view of the user. So, for example, the OTS explained that the Crown Forestry Rental Trust⁸ is getting better information out to Treaty claimants because the process is explained from the view of the claimants, including personal experiences. The OTS also encourages the claimant groups to talk to each other. Customs produces fact sheets on new topics, as needed, and these use a question and answer style.

Some agencies and intermediaries commented on the need for formatting information to make it easier to understand, especially for older people. For example, the Canterbury DHB staff wear larger name badges so that older people can read them more easily. One intermediary in Christchurch noted that there is a need for more information in large print.

A number of agencies recognised the importance of avoiding information overload and the use of confusing terminology. For example, the Waitakere Hospital keeps to a minimum what a patient needs to know to get to a service or understand what they are receiving. The hospital is easy to navigate with no visual clutter. It uses innovative signage for patients to follow to reach the appropriate unit (a picture that matches what is on the patient’s appointment letter). The titles of departments and treatment units are named using familiar terms. For example, ‘Radiology’ is used instead of ‘X-ray’ because that is what it is called on Shortland Street; and ‘special care baby unit’ replaces ‘neo-natal care’. ACC also focuses on their terminology and employing visible images.

Many agencies acknowledged that often their forms or information can be difficult for users to understand. Intermediaries identified that for some people it is necessary to provide face-to-face contact, as “some take a little longer to get it than others”. Some agencies ensure that staff are available to assist clients and answer any questions. One intermediary commented that even in a face-to-face situation, there can be a need to check back with the client that they understand what is being explained to them. If they are in a crisis situation they may “only pick up 20% of what’s being explained”.

A number of agencies have undertaken initiatives to improve this aspect of their customer interface. For example, the District Courts in Waitakere have a form filler project where staff help clients to fill in forms rather than simply distribute them. Other agencies have worked to improve their forms. The Canterbury DHB explained that its referral guidelines for primary health care providers have been improved and “more and more of these are online, easy to fill in and easy to access”. Immigration has also undertaken an initiative to improve their forms and checklists. Inland Revenue has opted for ensuring that there are minimal changes in its return forms so they remain familiar to people.

⁸ The Crown Forestry Rental Trust works to expedite the settlement of Māori claims against the Crown, which involve or could involve Crown forest licensed lands.

One intermediary described ‘SmartStart’, which is managed by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology, as an example of a process that “is simple to understand and has simple compliance”. It can be filled in online and it is “a dream”.

Agencies also identified that using ‘plain English’ for all communications helps to make information easier to understand. The Environment Court explained that its standard letters do not, for example, contain Latin words. “We use words that people can understand.” The MoE in Christchurch noted that the person who writes their brochures uses plain English “and the stakeholders really love it”. One intermediary confirmed that the MoE was “probably the best for user-friendly information”. The GSE have an organisational process called ‘let’s talk’ pitched at a 7-8 years old level.

However, Immigration in Christchurch acknowledged that all of its pamphlets are in English and it is not “very easy English to follow”. Immigration thought that this could impact on timeliness. For example, if a client can understand something in a pamphlet or on the website, then they may not have to come into the branch.

One intermediary in Christchurch highlighted the changing nature of ethnic diversity and commented that agencies need to be smarter about how they listen and talk to diverse communities. Many agencies make their information available in a range of languages, including Māori, Pacific and Cantonese. TPK have a bilingual website.

A number of agencies are linked to Language Line. This is a free service provided by the Office of Ethnic Affairs. Clients phone an agency, ask for the line and the language they want. A professional interpreter joins them on the phone to help them talk to the agency. The District Court in Waitakere also uses Language Line but suggested that it could be promoted more.

The Department of Building and Housing in Waitakere commented that the Language Line works well for single-issue matters but for more complex cases it pays to use face-to-face interpreters from the Manukau DHB services. Other agencies also use interpreters. Customs and MAF both ensure that interpreters can be accessed if needed at the international airports. The District Court in Waitakere stated that there is usually an interpreter at court, but not at the counter, and noted this as a service gap. However, they also have bilingual staff who are able to help. The Court Manager gave the example of personally attending to a Samoan divorce case, where she was able to speak pidgin Samoan.

Other agencies have also identified language capability within their own staff, including their call centre staff. MSD has a multilingual contact centre in Auckland, which, along with Work and Income’s other five contact centres, has extended its opening hours to include Saturdays from 8:00am to 1:00pm. Customs have some call centre staff who are able to speak in languages other than English when the need arises.

Customs also maintained that its call centre helps to convey information in an easy to understand manner. Customs recognised that a lot of its information is in technical language but noted that this was necessary in case of potential prosecutions.

Inland Revenue explained that it has a commitment to use the phone to talk through a case in order to prevent long correspondence by mail. LINZ has a shadowing function installed on the computers of the customer support staff at the contact centre. This allows staff to assist customers with the use of the LINZ application, Landonline.

Many agencies either provide, or are moving to provide, all their information on their websites. This makes it important that their websites are accessible and easy to understand. Intermediaries and respondents observed that some websites were better than others. For example, one intermediary in Christchurch found the Companies Office website “great”. The Companies Office reported that it follows the e-Govt web guidelines⁹.

Inland Revenue advised that it has adopted the e-Govt Web Standards (v1.0) guidelines as its minimum requirement to ensure the ongoing compliance and accessibility of its website. A dedicated e-Business Advisor is responsible for ensuring e-Govt Web Standards compliance and accessibility is achieved. Inland Revenue is also rewriting all web content using a ‘plain English’ approach from the customer’s perspective to improve web site usage. It is constantly improving this content approach through a customer testing and feedback loop. In addition, it provides access to content in both PDF and HTML versions.

On the other hand, Archives argued that access to information could be made easier if the e-Govt web guidelines were not so stringent. These had been “a severe constraint” for Archives over the last five years. However, Archives noted that it did have a high user rate through Archway, its online finding aid to government records. This function has three search levels – simple, advanced and index. The ‘Simple Search’ level “avoids the use of archives terminology and codes. The results are (as much as possible) written in plain English and the archives reference codes are replaced with the text they stand for”¹⁰. Future developments planned for Archway include providing information about government archives held in other institutions and about records still held by government agencies. Archives also hopes to add its indexed finding aids onto the system, and the digitised surrogates of archives themselves.

A number of intermediaries thought that some websites were difficult for people to navigate because of the graphics, layout and overload of information. NZTE stated that it is trying to reduce the size of graphics and documentation on its website to make it easier for people. DoL recognises that its website is not easy to understand as it has been written for technical people. A review and overhaul of the website is also underway.

Career Services has undertaken user research to find out, amongst other things, how user-friendly and helpful the website is. Research has shown that people found the information helpful but there was still a need to make the site more user-friendly, in terms of the look and feel and navigation.

Some agencies noted that websites are particularly useful for people with hearing disabilities. For those with visual impairments, phone lines were the most suitable. Career Services has a telephone advice line that can be accessed by those with visual impairments.

As already mentioned, for many people, intermediaries help to make agencies’ information accessible and easy to understand. For example, both the Legal Services Agency and an intermediary in Waitakere observed that people use lawyers to get explanations around, for instance, holiday pay and benefits.

Most agencies have national guidelines to ensure their information and publications are clear and consistent and the language as plain as possible. NZTE mentioned that frontline staff receive training to handle enquiries where English may not be the first language of the

⁹ <http://www.e.govt.nz/standards/web-guidelines>

¹⁰ <http://www.archway.archives.govt.nz/Searching.do>

inquirer. NZTE also promotes the use of plain English by supporting organisational training opportunities to improve the clarity of staff written communication skills.

Many agencies use feedback and user testing to check whether their information is easy to understand and accessible. Career Services has a feedback button on its website that staff respond to. The MED examines the queries and complaints it receives and if people clearly cannot understand or access an item, the Ministry changes the item until complaints drop. Inland Revenue undertakes analyses on the different call types to work out where the problems are and remedy them. Customs in Christchurch leaves fact sheets at the counter and if it gets feedback that “something was too hard to read or understand”, Customs will “look at altering it”.

A number of agencies receive feedback or make presentations to specific groups such as Māori and Pacific and migrant and refugee communities. For example, Customs in Christchurch spoke to the Somali community as the feedback it had received was this community did not understand some of its forms. It has also spoken to the Chinese community in Christchurch.

Some agencies test their material with focus groups or stakeholders. One example was ACC in Christchurch which uses focus groups of employers and medical practitioners to test out proposed information and material. ACC also uses claimant focus groups when it is changing forms. Other agencies involve user groups and stakeholders directly in the design stage. For example, LINZ identified that user groups had been actively involved in the designing process of its new electronic system.

Consistency of information across channels

The channels available to access agency services generally include:

- website
- phone, including call centres
- mail, including email
- text messaging
- face-to-face, including walk-ins.

DoL noted that its first preference is for people to use the website as this promises 24/7 access. Similarly, there is 24 hour access to DIA’s website with downloadable application forms and people can make online applications for lottery grants (via Grants Online). Immigration also provides an online channel for student permits and working visas but reported that the uptake is not high. DoL also encourages the use of its website because of the self-help tools available. The aim is to remove client dependency and allow users to self-navigate and self-assist. DoL explained that it has moved from “doing things *to* people to doing things *with* people”.

The Companies Office finds that many customer enquiries can be resolved more quickly by having customers go through the website’s self-help tools before revealing the contact centre number. It only promotes email as a support channel where that channel is most likely to achieve first contact resolution. This avoids long email conversations. Instead, the customer is encouraged to give their phone number and the contact centre rings them back.

LINZ is moving to a 100% electronic environment. Customers will still be able to write in and request information but LINZ is encouraging the move to electronic requests, to promote efficiency.

Inland Revenue in Christchurch considered that it could make more use of electronic channels to ensure people are fulfilling their obligations. For example, by collecting mobile phone numbers and email addresses, which are usually more stable than physical addresses. These could then be used to track people whose addresses have changed and who have not notified Inland Revenue.

Many agencies encourage the use of their call centres, with some even telling people who walk in to ring the call centre. HNZA has a 24/7 service available through its national call centre where clients can talk to a real person. Child Youth and Family has an 0508 FAMILY phone number for people worried about a child or young person, which provides a 24/7 response for critical referrals.

The Department of Building and Housing in Christchurch considered that its 0800 line was particularly useful for those people in remote areas with no access to computers. All of its 0800 numbers accept calls from both landlines and cell phones. There is an 0800 number for the national contact centre and five fully serviced offices around the country. The department noted that this has been an important initiative as increasingly tenants are choosing to have only a cell phone rather than incur the cost of landline connection and operating costs.

A couple of other agencies stated that they did not have an 0800 number and that it would be useful for people who cannot afford toll calls. The District Court in Waitakere found that an 0800 number would have been useful when there was a fire emergency and all of their services went down. Without an 0800 number there was no back-up.

The Police in Taranaki noted that the preferred channel to contact them is by phone, although some people used the 111 emergency number for non-emergency reasons. The Police in Auckland and Bay of Plenty are piloting a single non-emergency number (SNEN) that enables people to report crimes that are not emergencies over the phone. For example, burglaries can be reported over the phone and appointments set up for forensic staff to investigate. The service is available 24/7 with at least 12 officers at any one time who, according to the Police, can provide diversity of languages, empathy, timeliness, convenience (because people can report anytime) and reassurance, by following up.

SNEN may also cut down on the long waiting lines at the front counter. Waitakere City (which includes Henderson and New Lynn) is in the top four for the whole of the country for high levels of reporting at the front counter. As mentioned earlier, the Police in Waitakere are looking to redesign the counter to provide privacy for those reporting crimes as opposed to those being processed for a crime.

The Police are also piloting Internet type reporting and trialling texting as a way for people to report crimes. Immigration in Waitakere has also trialled text messaging to alert users of opening and closing hours, and progress of their application. Career Services is currently trialling a texting service where people can request information packs via text. It also has an online chat facility for people to reach the service.

Career Services also has a 24/7 web-based tool called Pathfinder. It is a free in-depth online career planning and guidance programme. It encourages users to call, email or chat online with a Career Services career advisor “to support people through their decision making process”¹¹. The programme allows the user to leave the site and come back later to their previous search.

¹¹ http://www2.careers.govt.nz/pathfinder_at_conf0.html

For some users, email was seen as a good alternative to the phone, where phone contact is problematic or as a good means of tracking communications. For this reason, the LSA advised that substantive matters to do with legal aid must be communicated in writing. This can draw out the process as any need to find out further information requires more letters. The LSA suggested that lawyers being able to send electronic applications online may be better than relying on the traditional paper applications.

One intermediary in Waitakere observed that following up phone calls with a letter was a good way of ensuring consistency of information, or at least that people understood the information they had been given. However, they acknowledged this may not always be practical given the volume of calls agencies can receive at a call centre. They thought that email could make it easier but recognised not everyone had email.

The channels that people prefer often depend upon individual circumstances. Where the service required is straightforward, the Internet was frequently cited as the preferred channel because of the convenience of acquiring information in one's own time without the need to travel to an office. One respondent thought it would be helpful if more of Immigration's application forms could be filled in online (Christchurch, returning OE, male). On the other hand, as issues became more complex, agencies, intermediaries and users identified that many people prefer to talk to a staff member. This can be either on the phone or face-to-face. Immigration has retained face-to-face meetings for skilled migrants because of the value they bring to New Zealand. The same respondent identified that face-to-face was essential for technical or important discussions where key decisions are required.

"I know that they've got an 0800 line you can ring, or you can go online to get questions answered but we had a specific question and we needed a specific answer very quickly so we had to go there". (Christchurch, Returning OE, male)

One intermediary in Waitakere observed that technology can help accessibility and the "more channels that people have access to, the more information there is available".

With more channels comes the importance of ensuring consistency of information across those channels. While some agencies showed a real desire to provide consistent information, others acknowledged that there were difficulties. Intermediaries provided examples of some agencies that were reasonably consistent with the information they provided across channels (for example, GSE) but there were also many examples of inconsistency. Generally, the problem was not so much lack of consistency over different channels but inconsistent information depending on "who you talk to" and this applied mostly to contact through call centres or face-to-face. One intermediary in Christchurch explained that "I have been known to put the phone down, wait five minutes, then ring again" to get an alternative answer when he was sure the first one was not right.

Agencies noted that experienced and trained staff were important for consistency of information and most undertake some form of training and monitoring of staff. HNZA has an Auckland training school that new Auckland-based staff attend. There is a standardised recruitment package that identifies the skill set and experience needed, and a standardised recruitment process that provides consistency. New staff attend a four-week training programme that is both theoretical and practical. After they start, they have a mentor. Refresher courses are provided that update staff on procedures and protocols, and self-audits are undertaken to ensure everyone is reading off the same page.

ACC explained that its training packages for staff are centrally coordinated and signed-off. Training covers not just content but delivering in a consistent manner. ACC also has refresher courses for staff to ensure consistent messages. Other agencies thought that having all inquiries going through the same person or people ensured consistency. However, some agencies recognised that despite training staff, knowledge of services was likely to vary and often this was due to high turnover.

To ensure consistency of information across channels, most agencies have a knowledge base that is accessible to all staff. In 1998, the MED introduced a Virtual Service Delivery (VSD) model comprising a national processing centre in Auckland, an 0800 contact centre in Christchurch, and a transactional website. This is centred on a shared database that everyone can access regardless of channels or whether they are staff, clients or intermediaries. Everyone gets the same service or information wherever they are.

DoL now has a virtual workplace and information contact centre, which acts as a “front door” for enquiries via phone, email, web or mail. As DoL explained, “accessibility starts there”. A knowledge management system, with current and readily accessible information, ensures that highly trained staff members can manage and access information related to all workplace services, rather than just managing individual types of services. This was described as “shared regional management and shared information systems”.

Immigration has one processing system – the global Application Management System (AMS) where information is electronically recorded in real time. Updates are reflected as soon as they are online. This means any immigration officer, for instance, a colleague in Shanghai, can pull up a client’s information and view the same data that a call centre staff member in New Zealand would see. This allows all employees to deliver consistent advice to applicants. However, one respondent’s experience of the call centre did not match his expectations. It appeared to him as though the call centre was a separate entity. It did not have immediate access to his information and he spent more time on hold than he would have liked.

“I somehow feel that it is a separate entity ... the call centre, so they wouldn’t have a lot of information pertaining to the details of a particular case, probably, so it takes time to figure out exactly the details. Probably if they can just [rely] on a question and answer format briefly they could probably tell you on the spot. They just tell you to hold, and probably get back to you in two to five minutes or much more.

It was just a simple question probably but somehow it was very confusing for them ... Something to do with the training probably or maybe the computers, the system”.
(Waitakere, new settler, male)

He was used to a quicker and more efficient Internet service than is available in New Zealand.

Other agencies also have internal databases that contact centre staff can access to provide consistent information. Career Services’ contact centre’s database is also accessible to its career consultants working face-to-face.

Most agencies have processes in place to ensure that all published material, at least, is up-to-date and consistent. For example, all material the Inland Revenue publishes on its website, through television or brochure, is checked for quality and utility before release, which ensures consistency. ACC’s material is centrally coordinated through a Communications and Marketing Division to ensure all material is signed-off against a consistent standard. NZTE has a specific team to address consistency, including reviewing the systems regularly and

taking the client's perspective into consideration, as well as staff comments and feedback. MED examines the top 10 queries from users every month and the responses go into the knowledgebase. The knowledgebase is the same one that contact centre staff see and which users can access online.

Career Services reported that it has a quality assured process of research to keep information current and ensure its website is up-to-date. This includes checking with other organisations such as Industry Training Organisations. Career Services also tries to maximise usage of other publicly funded data, for example the information on employment that DoL produces.

DoL stated that it tries to ensure that any information it shares with other organisations to provide to users, or any information created by other organisations that DoL is party to, is good, accurate and current.

Customs in Christchurch commented that the key agencies it interacts with are MAF, the Ministry of Health (MoH), and, at an operational level, Police. It undertakes joint inspections of containers and has joint declaration forms with MAF. Customs' computer system, Cusmod, allows other agencies, like MAF and MoH, to input information and then flag any consignments that may need a MAF or health permit.

The DHBs send out their information to people mainly through PHOs and other providers, although there can be difficulties with this approach. For example, in Christchurch each GP is a separate business and there are 400 in the region. Ensuring consistency of communication amongst them all can be tricky. Other agencies also stated that beyond their own services, it can be difficult to ensure the same level of consistency.

One intermediary said that having a paediatrician visit once a month allowed for consistency of information between teachers and families. These visits "were a real team approach to ensuring a child was receiving the appropriate health care they needed". However the "service has now been cut".

On the other hand, the Companies Office explained that it uses Inland Revenue's contact centre scripts so it can help customers with Inland Revenue enquiries without the customer having to talk to another person. The Companies Office also stated that it would like to see the biz portal being "transactional" rather than "brochure-ware" so that it is the single place for all interactions with business.

Some agencies identified that cross-government forums can help. The Christchurch Social Policy Interagency Network (CSPIN) brings together senior managers of the main social sector agencies. HNZA stated that CSPIN provides the opportunity for all the agencies represented to be "working from the same page". Similarly, Child Youth and Family in Taranaki said that Strengthening Families, where many agencies are in the one room, supports one message.

The NDSA also mentioned cross-government forums. It considered however that these forums are "a verbal flow" rather than being electronically supported. The NDSA thought a cross-government electronic server would be worth looking at. The Waitakere Hospital identified one area where the DHBs needed to improve consistency of information and that is around waiting lists.

Section 2

Responsive State Services

A spirit of service

Agencies, intermediaries and users noted how the quality of service received from staff can affect people's experience of State Services. Agencies were asked in what ways is a spirit of service evident when staff engage with users.

Having welcoming staff was often mentioned by agencies as evidence of a spirit of service. Waitakere Hospital has volunteers who meet and greet people at the entrance and direct them to appropriate locations within the hospital. In Christchurch, the Family Court has coordinators who greet people when the court opens and direct them to appropriate court rooms or the service that they require. Child Youth and Family has duty social workers onsite to address 'walk-in' client needs and discuss any issues.

Other agencies work to make the environment more welcoming. ACC in Taranaki has music, posters, colours and toys in the reception area. Career Services in Christchurch provides welcome messages in a range of different languages. The Waitakere Hospital uses picture icons and user-friendly terminology to make the hospital welcoming and easy to navigate. The hospital was designed in consultation with the community and their aspirations so "it is a pleasant environment with nice colour scheme, airy, open, cheerful, all on one level and has access to open areas". Hospital staff reported that people often say that the hospital is welcoming and does not look or feel like a hospital. The staff "are friendly", which was defined as "smiling and saying hello".

A number of agencies mentioned the importance of recruiting staff with a service ethic. GSE in Taranaki stated that the selection of front desk people is critical. "They are the first point of call; the face of the organisation". DOC considered that its staff have a strong ethic regarding the importance of the work they do. ACC in Taranaki recruit from the health sector, particularly the DHB, to ensure that its staff have health expertise.

Most agencies provide comprehensive training to staff, particularly those who work at the front line. GSE in Taranaki explained that staff are trained to identify client needs. GSE in Christchurch described how staff are trained under the 'pathway programme'. The programme has an access and engagement focus, which follows a process of "access, engagement, intervention, review and closure".

ACC invests in professional staff training that has a client centred focus concentrating on developing motivational interviewing and people skills. Staff learn about body language, verbal communication and encouragement techniques. The Family Court staff in Christchurch receive training on how to work with their clients. Staff explained that many clients feel like they may be seen as a criminal when entering the family court and staff work to reassure them that they are not.

Other agencies also mentioned a mentoring or buddy system as back up to the training process.

A number of agencies expected their staff to be good listeners and be able to deal with clients who are unhappy with the service. MAF telephone staff are trained on how to deal with difficult people. ACC staff are expected to listen and show empathy and respect for clients. The Police in Waitakere explained that showing empathy is about seeing clients as more than

just a number. Similarly, the Taranaki DHB emphasised that service is asking the right questions and “not treating people as units in a production line!” One respondent, when asked what she looks for in personal treatment said, “To be treated like a human being. For them to recognise you as a person” (Waitakere, small import business, woman).

ACC staff in Taranaki are expected to give clients time to tell their story and build a rapport with them. They seek to understand the individual’s situation and be non-judgemental and open-minded. One respondent’s experience of his case manager following a change of staff member was that “she was more sympathetic to what I’d been through to that point ... She took on board more of the whole picture as opposed to dealing with the one issue” (Christchurch, self-employed with injury, male).

However, some agencies identified that a spirit of service can be difficult to maintain because of the nature of their role. Child Youth and Family staff in Waitakere explained how they have an enforcement role and often have to deal with people who are not voluntary clients. Work and Income in Waitakere described how some clients can be reluctant to talk about their full situation. Extracting the client’s story and seeing whether they are entitled to services can be “a very delicate affair”. Often, case managers have limited time to build rapport and on a small number of occasions some clients can become violent when they do not get what they requested. For these agencies, it can be a balancing act between providing a spirit of service and ensuring staff safety. This can mean that some clients who are known to be violent are barred from the office, or sometimes services are provided through intermediaries and advocates.

MAF explained that face-to-face interactions with the public are often hard for its inspectors because they are going through someone else’s belongings. The inspectors receive no formal training in this area but they learn through a mentoring system and focus on not being intrusive. It was also noted that a lot of the enforcement group at MAF are actually ex-police officers.

Many agencies commented on the professionalism, commitment and passion of their staff as evidence of spirit of service. As DOC in Taranaki stated, “staff are very committed and passionate about the work they do ... staff are highly engaged and motivated”. Other agencies mentioned that their staff have a “can do” attitude and are willing to go the extra mile. One respondent in Waitakere, pleased with the service he had received, commented that staff at Immigration were, “Fairly accessible, helpful, friendly and probably go out of their way, was amazed at the service”. (Waitakere, new international settler, male)

Agencies and intermediaries commented on the need for staff to reflect the community they serve. Some seek to recruit people of different ethnicities in order to serve their increasingly diverse clientele. The Waitematā DHB employs staff from different cultural backgrounds who can understand people’s varying cultural outlooks and attitudes. For example, the stigma attached to ill-health by Asians. The Canterbury DHB is progressing work to improve cultural awareness and responsiveness to Asian populations amongst its staff.

Other agencies also provide training for their staff. Career Services in Christchurch described the ‘Cultural Detective’ resource it uses that helps staff to better understand and work with people from different cultures.

A number of agencies and intermediaries commented on the importance of developing relationships, particularly with Māori. TPK in Waitakere explained that this meant being “humble, actively listening, offering assistance, respect, not oppressive or dogmatic” or Māori

“will walk away”. It was important to level with people and “put up the tent and make the tea.”

The OTS identified that it worked hard to build strong relationships with Māori groups and the key determinant of its spirit of service is the strength of those relationships. A ‘Manākitanga’ policy guides staff in their behaviour with claimants, that is, not scrimping with food, paying site visits and offering alternative locations for meetings. Facilitators and Kaumatua are also used to support relationship building.

Archives staff in Christchurch build relationships with their clients in order to assist with their research enquiries. Archives noted that having a small office facilitated this, as regular users got to know the staff. One respondent in Waitakere indicated that it is important to be able to see consistent staff members for the purpose of building rapport. However, this was not her experience.

“I’ve never seen the same psychiatrist more than once. I go there every three months for my medication and I have never had the same psychiatrist. It’s always been seeing one psychiatrist and then the next three months comes and it’s another one, so I think that gets up my nose”. (Waitakere, experience of mental illness, female)

MSD in Christchurch stated that a spirit of service is evident by staff adopting a wider social development view and having a more outward focus. By having staff working out in the community, HNZC are able to see all the issues affecting their clients’ ability to sustain housing. In Taranaki, agency staff explained that the HNZC case manager provides intensive management for people with a range of high needs. Career Services in Christchurch holds regular case manager network meetings where they discuss issues relating to groups of clients to make sure that they are doing the best for them.

Agencies also described initiatives that they have put in place to support staff in providing a better service, including providing staff with encouragement, support and a “nice place” to work in. For example, MSD in Christchurch has a system called ‘what’s up doc?’ that tracks employment outcomes, including success stories. A weekly letter of encouragement is then sent from the Regional Commissioner to the staff members involved. Agency staff noted that MAF’s recent refurbishment in Auckland makes the office a pleasant place for staff to come back to. It also means that staff can hold meetings at their office instead of always going to the other party. Some agencies also provide strong peer support.

Other agencies mentioned their standards of service excellence or organisational codes of conduct, which encourage staff to treat people sensitively, promptly, courteously, professionally and fairly. Inland Revenue’s customer charter sets out how staff will work with customers. For example, staff have to acknowledge individual, cultural and special needs and follow through on what they say.

Many agencies carry out client satisfaction surveys to gauge how well their staff and services are doing. For example, GSE in Christchurch carries out client surveys every year to test relationships between staff and the families they work with. GSE in Taranaki explained how it formally seeks client feedback when a case is closed. This feedback is used for staff development purposes in a continuous improvement model.

Some agencies measure their engagement through focus groups or interviews with clients and through interaction with consumer groups. As MSD explained, advocacy groups will call them if they are not doing their job, “so this keeps us on our toes”. A number of agencies undertake

some form of monitoring. For example, LINZ undertakes call monitoring for quality control and training purposes. This ensures consistency of customer information and quality of service. Other agencies monitor satisfaction through their complaints process.

Most agencies provided assurance that if there are complaints they will investigate and endeavour to solve problems quickly and comprehensively. For example, if MAF receives a complaint it will check with the specific office involved to find out its side of the story. MAF explained that “Even if the staff member has made a mistake, we will recognise this and apologise where necessary but still support the staff member”.

The results of client satisfaction feedback varied. While some intermediaries and respondents thought that agencies could do more to improve the quality of their staff, a number of agencies noted that much of their feedback was positive. The MED reported that for four years running, the Companies Office has come out of a KPMG survey as the most helpful government agency.

Tailoring services

A number of agencies have specifically designed roles to tailor their approach to particular groups or circumstances. For example, DoL has a small business unit that works with small business networks, not individuals. It uses these networks to reach potential users. Inland Revenue has a network of business tax information officers who proactively engage face-to-face with businesses. During the year beginning 1 July 2006, it undertook around 80,000 ad hoc or pre-arranged appointments with customers.

GSE employs Kaitakawaenga in the regions to help GSE specialists provide culturally appropriate services to Māori children and young people, and their whānau and educators¹². GSE in Christchurch also has someone to work with Pacific whānau, but because Christchurch has a low Pacifica population, this role is contracted. The wider MoE in Christchurch also has a person to consider strategic issues for Māori and Pacific people. In addition to the Kaitakawaenga service, Taranaki also has an Āwhina Roopu (support group) drawn from the community to advise staff in their services to Māori.

Most agencies also endeavour to have staff who reflect the diversity of their community. One agency acknowledged that it is difficult to provide empathy when staff do not culturally relate to the people they deal with. For example, Police in Waitakere noted that Māori prefer to deal with Māori officers, particularly around death issues. The Police have Iwi liaison officers to work with Māori and Pacific peoples liaison officers. They also have youth aid officers who specialise in working with young people.

MSD has Family Start workers from different ethnicities. However, MSD also expects that all staff should be able to work with different groups. The main aim, MSD stated, is to work respectfully.

Agencies identified other ways that they tailor their services to engage with Māori and Pacific people. For example, the MoE in Waitakere engages with Māori through ‘Te Mana’. ‘Te Mana’ is a strategy that seeks to increase participation and raise expectations of Māori achievement¹³. There is a quarterly magazine for rangatahi called *Taiohi*. It includes inspirational stories to model what success looks like. There is also a teacher resource called *Te Mana Kōrero* and a range of brochures that are available free of charge by calling 0800 80

¹² <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=10808&indexid=10835&indexparentid=8825>

¹³ <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=6662&indexid=8733&indexparentid=6508>

MANA (0800 80 6262). There is a website (www.taiohi.co.nz) linking with *Taiohi* magazine's inspirational stories, music and other features.

An alternative education school is available through Te Whanau O Waipareira Trust¹⁴. Staff from the MoE also attend the Pacifika festival.

The Canterbury DHB explained that it funds specific services to improve accessibility. For example, services by Māori for Māori and by Pacific people for Pacific people.

HNZC in Christchurch explained that it is trying to work in a way that takes it closer to the community by holding Housing Forums that are run in conjunction with the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA). Staff from HNZC, including two Samoan speaking staff members, attended these forums. HNZC also produces a national publication called *Close to Home* that is tailored to each region and incorporates local messages; so for example, the Christchurch/Nelson/Marlborough publication will be slightly different to the other 10 regional publications.

Agencies also tailor their services to reach migrants and refugees. MSD administers the 'Settling In' community development programme for refugees and migrants. The settling in team works with refugee and migrant communities to help them find solutions to their own needs. For example, the team in Auckland is assisting a group of Muslim leaders from Afghani, Somali and Iraqi communities to develop a range of activities to strengthen their families and ease their settlement in New Zealand¹⁵. The Waitakere Hospital develops links with religious groups including Muslims and Pacific churches. The hospital has established a prayer room for the Muslim community with a donated prayer rug.

Immigration in Christchurch stated it holds immigration clinics for residency applications that include one-to-one help from an immigration officer. Skilled migrants also can have one-on-one contact. In addition, there are immigration officers who speak a variety of different languages.

A number of agencies also use the Language Line for speakers of other languages.

Many of these specific roles are also able to be mobile. The South Taranaki District Council noted that the HNZC mobile managers are a good example of this. TPK explained that, "People shouldn't have to come to us. Staff make themselves available when people are able to meet". Staff have technology that allows them to work in the field.

Inland Revenue's business tax information officers can go out to customers. In Waitakere, the migrant liaison officer goes monthly to the New Zealand Ethnic Social Services Trust and the CAB to provide assistance. The New Zealand Ethnic Social Services Trust confirmed that Inland Revenue visits every month "to do one-to-one problem solving". The Waitemata DHB is looking at putting together a mobile team for refugees.

Other examples of mobile services include a mobile dental unit in Taranaki for children who do not have access to a clinic. MSD can provide a visiting service to homes and hospitals, especially for clients on invalid's benefits. The Waitakere Hospital operates a hospital shuttle to get people from home to the hospital.

¹⁴ <http://www.waipareira.com/whatwedo.htm>

¹⁵ <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/our-work/community-development/settling-in.html>

MSD provides some mobile services for people in remote areas. In Christchurch, it also provides transport costs so that people in rural Canterbury can get to appointments. In Taranaki, some bus services linking the more rural communities have been established on a trial basis with assistance from the Taranaki Regional Council. One service links Opunake with Hawera and New Plymouth, and Waverly-Patea with Hawera. Another bus service is now operating in New Plymouth, Bell Block, Waitara and Oakura¹⁶.

To target other rural non-users of their services, a number of agencies use Heartlands. Heartlands centres provide 'one-stop-shops' in mainly rural areas where the local population can access a range of government services and information. People can either meet government representatives face-to-face or access their services through phone, email or their websites. The Heartlands Service Coordinator can set up appointments and direct people to the services that meet their needs¹⁷. The South Taranaki District Council noted that this was a good initiative.

Some offices also work offsite in community locations. For example, as part of the Aranui Community Renewal Project, three housing officers work out of a former State house turned into a community house. The Community Renewal project was a HNZC initiative but having worked through the project, HNZC is now stepping back and the community is taking the lead. According to HNZC, the Aranui project is a leader in community renewal projects. Work and Income also work out of there and they are joined by some NGOs. People are free to just wander in. Work and Income in Waitakere also runs an office from a Māori urban authority's complex.

Some agencies described the measures they have taken to meet the requirements of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. For example, DIA has easy access to counters for disabled people. Career Services in Christchurch provides wheelchair access. Inland Revenue identified that it uses the services of New Zealand Relay for deaf people.

Despite these measures, one intermediary stated that government agencies needed to work more closely with disability groups, as well as veteran groups and the Returned Services Association.

Agencies identified ways that they tailor their services to engage with young people. For example, the MoE seeks to identify those who are not participating in early childhood education through the Promoting Participation Project. Māori and Pacific communities are over-represented in low early childhood education participation, and receive support through the project.

The Waitakere City Council mentioned the Everyday Theatre Group, part of the Everyday Communities programme, which helps to raise awareness regarding family violence among children at schools. MSD in Waitakere said it has the Youth Transition Services that identifies youth who are at risk of falling out, or have fallen out, of the system and engages them before they leave school. The age group focused on is between 15-17 years old, after which they can claim benefits. This service assists young people as they transition from school to further education, training, work or other activities that contribute to their long-term independence and wellbeing¹⁸.

¹⁶ <http://www.trc.govt.nz/about+taranaki/transport.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.heartlandservices.govt.nz/>

¹⁸ <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/get-assistance/youth-transition-services.html>

Agencies also mentioned improving access to their services through different channels. Career Services has a tool called CareerQuest that is an interactive CD Rom. The tool helps people to discover and explore occupations that suit their interests, skills and study choices. In Christchurch, a computer with Internet access is provided at the office for anyone who does not have access to a PC or the Internet.

Career Services is also looking at ways to make its website more attractive to, and relevant for, young people. Staff noted that the website is for everyone, however, there is a project underway that focuses on young people moving from schools to tertiary education. The 'Better Tertiary and Trade Training Decision Making' (BTATTD) will expand and enhance Career Services' website and also increase the availability of quality, personal advice to learners¹⁹. It is intended to become a one-stop-shop for people planning their career or assessing their tertiary education options.

Career Services is also looking to specifically improve the information available to parents. Staff explained that parents are "an important influencer", helping their children make decisions. The BTATTD initiative will be looking at ways to improve the provision of information, awareness and support to parents.

Settlement Support reported that DoL has built a software tool for them, which enables Settlement Support to put in requests and match them with the services and workshops available.

Most agencies recognise the importance of providing for the use of support people. For example, Māori are able to take support with them to ACC for interviews and assessments. MSD in Taranaki explained that clients may get an agent to act on their behalf. DIA in Christchurch said that people often bring in family members to translate for them. The Waitakere Hospital explained that it has an Asian Support Service that employs volunteer lay people who have a translating and support role. In one instance, it helped to improve an elderly Chinese man's hospital experience by clarifying that his agitation and desire to discharge himself before his treatment was completed was related to his desire to wear his own pyjamas. Once this was understood and he was reassured that it was perfectly acceptable for his family to bring in his own pyjamas he calmed down and was happy to stay to complete his treatment.

The Waitakere Hospital is also increasing its inpatient bed capacity to address gaps in services. The Legal Services Agency (LSA) funds Community Law Centres to increase access to legal advice. In addition, under the duty solicitor scheme²⁰, the LSA is responsible for ensuring that there are enough lawyers at each district court to provide legal advice or legal assistance. This means that for the larger district courts, such as the Waitakere District Court, the agency will arrange for duty solicitors to be present everyday. In smaller courts, a duty solicitor may be present only when required, such as on active Court days.

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) provides the Environmental Legal Assistance fund to assist community, iwi and hapū groups to prepare, mediate and/or present resource management cases to the Environment Court. Environment Court cases before the High Court or Court of Appeal will also be considered for funding. The fund is only available to non-

¹⁹ http://www2.careers.govt.nz/education_and_trade_training0.html

²⁰ Section 47 of the Legal Services Act 2000 states that "The object of the duty solicitor scheme is to ensure that there is available in each District Court a sufficient number of lawyers for the purpose of assisting, advising, and representing unrepresented defendants charged with an offence".

profit groups and not individuals²¹. MfE also provides some funding to the Environmental Defence Society so that the society can provide advice to individuals.

No wrong door

Some agencies indicated that they had adopted an all-of-service approach or a “not wrong part of the department” model to ensure people receive the appropriate services within the organisation. Most said that their staff were highly trained or skilled enough to know where to refer customers internally. For example, DoL stated that staff members are trained to identify users’ needs and forward them on to appropriate specialist experts such as labour inspectors or mediators. Staff are assisted in this role by the knowledge management system which allows staff to access information related to all workplace services, for instance, health and safety, employment relations and labour market information. The system also holds current, readily accessible and shared client information that provides the appropriate staff with full client history, and knowledge of staff movements around clients, in order to provide an integrated or “seamless service”. DoL explained that with telephone enquires it preferred to try and help at the time and not refer people on or have them ring again. Most enquires were satisfied at the contact centre, with only a small percentage having to be forwarded on.

GSE in Taranaki, as part of the wider central south region, has developed a series of working protocols with its operational colleagues in MoE. The aim is to have a more coherent ‘joined up’ service, with ‘no wrong door’ for clients. The protocols are being trialled and the intent is that they will become the way MoE does things in a “one Ministry” approach.

Other agencies also had, or were planning to have, information systems that staff could readily access in order to help a client regardless of what part of the organisation staff are in, or to be able to refer them on to the appropriate person. ACC now scans its documents so they are available to all those who need it. This means that no matter who receives an inquiry, they can be a channel to the correct person.

MAF has just implemented the ABC Call Centre Solution at the Auckland Bio Security Centre. The key element is the new auto-attendant system that directs calls to the appropriate team to address a query. The system features:

- an up-front auto attendant menu functionality (which directs importers’ calls to the right place first without having to be transferred again)
- a queuing system on each menu option with progress announcements at various time intervals (these progress announcements also advise what documentation is required)
- a ‘call back’ option if callers have been waiting for a certain time (this ensures their place is held in the queue and they are rung back when their call is reached).

Other call recording functions are expected to be brought into production.

A number of agencies noted that they often receive inquiries not related to their specific work, usually because people are confused about which agency provides which service. For example, DIA is often confused with Immigration or agencies responsible for divorces. Archives receives inquiries regarding births, deaths and marriages. In most of these cases, agencies advised that they refer these inquiries on to the appropriate agency. Similar to their policy on internal referrals, these agencies promote a ‘no wrong door’ policy. As MSD explained, “We push the ‘no wrong door’ policy hard. The MSD leadership team have this

²¹ <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withoutyou/funding/ela.html>

policy as an objective”. The Police noted that in some rural areas they are often the only door (besides the voluntary fire service and possibly DOC).

Once again, agencies work to ensure that their staff are trained and up-to-date with current policies and developments. “People from other agencies/groups are invited to talk and upskill MSD staff in the services they have”. The Police explained that all staff have training in how to deal with sexual abuse victims and how to refer them on to the appropriate staff or organisation immediately. However, some agencies did acknowledge that often referring appropriately can depend on the experience and institutional knowledge of individual staff members.

Some agencies provide resources for their contact centre and counter staff. Inland Revenue contact centre staff have protocols about what to say and where to send people. LINZ counter staff in Christchurch are provided with a list of addresses and numbers of where they can refer people to. MAF receptionist staff have a common questions and answers document on hand. Most of their referrals go to DOC, AGriQuality New Zealand, regional councils or health boards. MSD has a database with a list of agencies/groups and locations that enable staff to direct people to the right place. MSD also has the National Directory that details what services are available in each area, and this is publicly available on its website.

Most agencies also provide links on their websites to related agencies. For example, Career Services provides a link to StudyLink and vice versa. Immigration in Christchurch identified that this was something it could consider, that is, linking to other agency websites. For example, “If you need an IRD number this is where to go”.

For many agencies, it is the relationships and networks that staff have built up that facilitate referrals. Regular networking meetings help to connect government departments to each other and to non-government organisations so that they are familiar with each others’ functions. Local knowledge also helps. The New Plymouth District Council has set up ‘team accounts’ who have the knowledge and mechanisms to direct people accordingly. Economic development teams refer people to the right agencies if they want to start up their own business, such as NZTE or Inland Revenue, while an education team directs people to education training agencies. The District Court in Waitakere maintained that family violence court judges are very familiar with their local networks and are aware of all the relevant agencies that should be involved in certain types of cases. The Police in Waitakere thought that referring works better in the justice sector than the social sector because police officers have more knowledge of the former.

Some agencies have taken a case management approach that involves looking at all the services a client may need and then referring them on. For example, people with experience of mental illness may need help with drug and alcohol dependency, employment and housing assistance. In some instances, the staff member takes responsibility for arranging interviews or meetings with other agencies for the client. Other agencies are moving towards what DoL has called a ‘client centric’ focus or wrapping services around the client. DoL looks at all the needs of the client and then offers to bring all expert services to the client, for instance, in a one-day workshop, rather than the client going to each expert separately.

Some agencies have processes to track progress of their referrals and to know that they are working well. Child Youth and Family tracks the progress of referrals that are received at the National Call Centre and sent out electronically to the site closest to the family subject to the referral for follow up. Career Services provides a report back to MSD for any client referred

from MSD. TPK in Taranaki advised that it follows up any referral that it has made and considers significant. One family that MSD had been working with was so happy with the results and support they had received that they did not mind their details and story being used for future projects. The family noted that it was extremely important and helpful to be put onto the right people early.

However, there were many instances where agencies took a 'hope and see' approach rather than a formal process of following up and there were a number of examples of inappropriate referrals or even none. As one agency stated, "Generally speaking, for those that contact [us], the receptionist will hopefully direct the call to the right place".

The South Taranaki District Council (STDC) told of the odd cases of Work and Income referring people to the Council for emergency housing, which the Council does not provide. The Council thought that had the staff member involved phoned the Council themselves, while the person was sitting there, they would have saved the client an unnecessary trip.

One intermediary in Waitakere gave an example of refugees wanting to obtain a learner's driving licence. Land Transport New Zealand (LTNZ) does not accept certificates of identity so refugees have to write to the Immigration branch in Mangere to ask them to write to LTNZ. The intermediary noted, however, that LTNZ are beginning to talk with Immigration about this issue.

LINZ stated that it can refer people who are looking for a surveyor only to the yellow pages to avoid showing any preference for a particular surveyor. This was similar to the experience of the respondents who had to put an elderly parent into residential care. The DHB was not able to provide them with a list of rest homes that were accredited to provide an 'end of life' package.

"Well I guess you get that in your own phone book really but you just have to ring and say 'have you got this end of life package?', 'no', 'thank you very much', 'have you got this end of life?', that's what you had to do". (Christchurch, residential care, female)

The respondents thought the DHB had to be careful that they were not seen to be favouring one rest home over another, but it did not provide a good experience for them.

The Canterbury DHB subsequently advised that information on services for older people is now available through:

- an intranet list of both Support Care and Aged Care residential beds, available to all Needs Assessment Service Coordination and Social Work staff to provide to relatives and people seeking placement
- a *Question of Care* booklet produced for each area giving comprehensive information regarding all services for older people
- the ElderNet Internet site (www.eldernet.co.nz/Home) that provides information on bed availability.

NZTE explained that if it receives an inquiry from someone looking for a business consultant, it will give three or four different company names that people can choose from. NZTE would never give out just one name, but this way it has provided a starting point for people. Another respondent described how they were able to select a new school for their children via Te Kete Ipurangi website.

“it’s a ... resource that links you into ERO reports and school – like you can look up school lists and click on the map of New Zealand and find schools in that area and then click on the ERO reports. So it’s quite a good resource”. (Taranaki, rural school, female)

A number of intermediaries thought that agencies were getting better at referring people to the appropriate services. Others noted that departments were not so good at referring between themselves but good at referring people to the NGO sector. Some intermediaries thought these referrals appropriate as they were in a position to help. Others stated that they were receiving people who could be dealt with elsewhere or who had such complex needs that they could not help them. Intermediaries explained that if agencies wanted to improve on referrals there needed to be: better cooperation between agencies; closer relationships between both agencies and intermediaries; and a better understanding by agencies of the services available and who provides them.

It appeared to both some agency staff and intermediaries that there are relationships and information sharing at the strategic level but these did not seem to be making their way down to the coal-face or front line.

Coordination and collaboration

One agency identified that the best solution for directing people to the appropriate services happens when staff from different agencies are “in one room”, or working together, particularly for high needs clients. As MSD in Waitakere stated, “It is in the nature of MSD’s work that we can’t work alone – you can’t put people in jobs if they don’t also have health care, houses to live in and education”. Intermediaries and agencies identified a desire and willingness to collaborate around joint clients and there were many examples.

Heartlands

One of the best examples the researchers heard about from agencies, intermediaries and respondents is Heartlands. As one intermediary in Christchurch described it, “Heartlands is a good model of agencies working together in a one-stop-shop”. HNZN provided one example of a woman relocating from one city to another with a special needs child needing multiple agency assistance. By going to Heartlands she was able to be linked to a range of services, including a house from HNZN and a settlement grant from Work and Income.

A couple of agencies identified that the coordinator of Heartlands is the key to its success. One coordinator explained that by building a thorough knowledge of what services are out there, coordinators are able to connect people to the services they need. The relationships that coordinators build with agencies means that agencies know and trust the coordinator, which makes it easier to coordinate services for clients. It also means that clients only have to tell their story once.

Co-location

Another example of agency collaboration is co-location. Similar to the Heartlands model, HNZN has set up a visiting scheme with Work and Income at its service centres. People can visit HNZN at those offices through an appointment process. HNZN in Christchurch described how one staff member responsible for the North Canterbury properties asked if he could operate out of the Work and Income offices in Kaiapoi and Rangiora because it was difficult for customers to travel to Papanui where he normally worked. This was able to be done because of the relationships that the regional managers of HNZN and MSD had developed. Working out of Work and Income has helped HNZN to build connections with the community.

HNZC is getting referrals from the community about higher level cases, such as the people living in caravans and barns. As HNZC pointed out, because 90 per cent of its customers are also Work and Income customers, it makes sense to work together.

Other agencies have followed suit. Child Youth and Family in Waitakere is co-located with Work and Income. GSE in Taranaki has an initiative called ‘Walk in each other’s shoes’ where staff work out of another agency for a week. For example, someone from GSE works for a week in the Child Youth and Family office. There is also an interagency team involving GSE, Child Youth and Family and Mental Health, whose role is to be a one-stop shop for any client that needs the services of two or more of those agencies. According to GSE, this way, clients only have to give their story once.

Inland Revenue described a pilot in Taranaki where staff members are trained to provide information on both child support and working for families. Clients only have to see one person instead of two, which again means they only have to give information once.

Data integration

Agencies also collaborate through data integration. DoL works closely with Statistics New Zealand and Inland Revenue on the ‘Linked Employer-Employee Data’ (LEED) project that integrates existing employer and employee information. The project draws on existing administrative data from the taxation system and business data from Statistics New Zealand’s Business Frame. The data provided by Inland Revenue is depersonalised and individuals are not identified within the data. The project aims to provide insights into the operation of the labour market and its relationship to business performance. It is also expected to provide new information on how skills develop during an individual’s working life and the role of companies in this. A later project will measure the incidence, number and cost of workplace accidents²². Although the project is not focused on service delivery, it is intended to reduce the amount of information that employees and employers have to provide.

Another example is the biz portal, a New Zealand whole of government business portal designed to make running a business easier²³. It provides information and is a gateway to business resources. The site has been primarily designed and written with the needs of small to medium sized businesses in mind. It is managed and maintained by NZTE. One respondent described it as “bloody brilliant mate” (Waitakere, small import business, female). As noted previously, MED would like to see the portal being transactional rather than “brochureware” so that it becomes the single place for all interactions between government and businesses. Otherwise, people still have to go to multiple sites to transact their business. MED would like something similar to the Companies Office website where people incorporating a new company online can apply for a company IRD number at the same time. To simplify the process even further, the Companies Office wants to use the IRD number as the company number.

As mentioned previously, MAF and Customs have an integrated electronic system that allows them to share information with each other and have joint declaration forms. They are co-located in Auckland and Christchurch and can undertake joint presentations and joint operations. Customs also undertakes joint operations with the Ministry of Fisheries and the Police. In addition, Customs uses the Companies Office database to contact joint clients.

²² <http://www.dol.govt.nz/initiatives/strategy/leed/>; <http://www.stats.govt.nz/datasets/work-income/linked-employer-employee-data.htm>

²³ <http://www.business.govt.nz/>

Inter-agency forums

Agencies collaborate around families through formal interagency forums such as Strengthening Families, family group conferences and regional intersectoral forums (RIFs). Strengthening Families was started in Waitakere under the name 'Effective Practice'. The Strengthening Families coordinator facilitates meetings attended by the family and involved agencies and decides on the appropriate lead agency for the family. This agency then becomes the family's point of contact for services from all agencies.

Similarly, OTS has a coordinating role in bringing together agencies for the purpose of settling Treaty claims. OTS brokers relationship protocols between claimants and other agencies so that claimants do not have to deal with individual agencies on their own.

The Christchurch Social Policy Interagency Network (CSPIN) brings together senior managers of the main social sector agencies. It also includes representatives from the Christchurch City Council. It works at a strategic, rather than operational, level but it provides a platform for sharing information and collaborating around high needs groups. Participants are able to identify areas of joint concern and opportunities. For example, a collaborative youth plan was launched in 2003. The plan provides a strategic framework focusing on outcomes for young people between the ages of 13-19 years.

In addition to Strengthening Families, MSD has introduced a new integrated service response process. MSD explained that this is a more proactive approach to bundling services than Strengthening Families. On receiving information via referrals, from the Police for example, the idea is to go out "looking for problems", rather than waiting for the problems to surface. It involves a multi-agency approach but allows the family to decide what help they need and from whom. The collaborations are governed by local memorandums of understanding (MoUs) whereas Strengthening Families has twelve government department chief executive officers signed up to the all-of-government initiative. One intermediary in Taranaki stated that the new MoUs are a good example of agencies collaborating where family violence is concerned.

Family violence collaboration

Agencies and intermediaries have built up networks to collaborate around family violence. Child Youth and Family in Waitakere explained that weekly meetings are held with Police and Women's Refuge to discuss family violence referrals that involve children and decide on a response. Women's Refuge and Police have set up family safety teams in Christchurch. The Refuge and Police talk to the client together and then both organisations can talk to Child Youth and Family and Work and Income on the client's behalf. They can then feed back the agencies' response to the client. By working together, the Police get their evidence, the intermediary gets the client's story and together they can decide what support is needed.

The Waitakere City Council noted that Police are proactive in referring family violence victims to Victim Support and Women's Refuge services. One respondent confirmed that after consulting the Police, she was referred to Women's Refuge, which then assisted her with an application for a protection order (Waitakere, Protection Order, female).

Work and Income has developed a family violence intervention programme. Case managers have been trained to identify and respond to clients who are experiencing family violence. Family violence response coordinators have been appointed to provide support to case managers and liaise with local support services. The programme ensures that Work and Income staff:

- have a greater awareness of the effects of family violence and the barriers victims face to participate fully in the community
- provide a safe and sensitive environment for clients experiencing family violence
- develop close links with local family violence service agencies
- will be able to refer clients to appropriate support services²⁴.

Child protection

In the area of child protection, Child Youth and Family is piloting the Differential Response Model (DRM). It is a change to the way Child Youth and Family can respond to different reports of abuse, neglect or insecurity of care – a response that varies depending on the type of report received. For example, responses to reports of neglect can differ from those that concern sexual abuse. Under this model, there is also more ability to include NGOs in assisting Child Youth and Family. Collaboration between Child Youth and Family and Open Home Foundations is an example. Open Homes Foundation is a national provider that can provide alternative care situations for children for a period of time.

Youth justice

Police have adopted an integrated service approach in preventive areas, including youth justice. They are working with Child Youth and Family and the Courts to keep youth out of the court system – as once youth are caught in the system, they are more likely to re-offend. Research has shown the Police that there is a drop-off in offending after 25 years of age, so by keeping youth out of the system until then, the long-term outcomes are improved.

In Waitakere, Police noted that there are 3,600 cases of family violence reported each year and they have identified the link between family violence cases and youth at risk. They have specialist youth aid officers to work with at-risk families and young people. Police youth aid officers work with Child Youth and Family youth justice social workers where at-risk children have been identified. They share information at an operational level as they are usually dealing with the same people. They can also undertake joint visits to the youth's home. Once a youth has been brought to the attention of Police, they set up a youth development team, which includes a youth justice coordinator, to bring services to the youth. The Police will look at alternatives to going to court, including family group conferences.

For those youth that end up in court in Waitakere there is a Māori/Pacific diversion scheme. This is similar to the Police adult diversion scheme where a first time offender who has committed a minor offence can be assigned community work. The criteria for youth is broader and includes more than just first-time offenders. A community advocate sits in court to provide advice to the Judge and work closely with the Police. This was similar to the experience of a family in Waitakere of a young person entering the justice system. Following his appearances in court, the young man was given a plan of community service. However, his mother was not aware that the Police take responsibility to try and keep young people out of the justice system.

“I don't believe that it's the Police's responsibility to try and keep him out. I believe the Police are there to process the law”. (Waitakere, Family of young person entering the justice system, female)

²⁴ <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/documents/support-communities/fvip-info-sheet-december-2006.pdf>

The mother also noted that the family's experience with different youth justice coordinators has been variable.

The Police also collaborate with a number of other agencies. As one senior Police officer explained, Police are not social workers but they need to work with them to assist offenders to get back into a meaningful way of life. So for example, in Taranaki, HNZA and the Police meet weekly.

Migrants and refugees

Agencies also collaborate around integrating migrants into New Zealand life. In 2002, the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration project was set up as a project between the Waitakere City Council, local community organisations and central government agencies. Its aim is to facilitate collaborative projects that make a difference to the wellbeing of the community of Waitakere City. Seven 'Calls to Action' were identified, one of which is "every new migrant or refugee to Waitakere settled successfully"²⁵.

New Out West (NOW), the migrant and refugee 'Call to Action', was launched in 2003. This includes the Council, ethnic community groups, NGOs and a range of government agencies working together to develop innovative local solutions to meet the needs of migrant communities. It looks to build on existing services and fill the gaps where existing services fail to meet needs. According to participants, this initiative has been working well, mainly because of the people involved. There has been turnover but they are still getting good representation at the meetings, on average 15-30 people attend each meeting, "which shows demand for this type of collaboration". The key to its success has been participants "hanging around" after formal meetings to talk. This has led to other projects emerging. One example was the establishment of the Waitakere Ethnic Board.

The Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy is another vehicle for supporting refugees and migrants. It is aligned to the New Zealand Settlement Strategy. The Auckland Strategy has ten goals; goal one is to increase access to settlement-related services. This led to the establishment of Settlement Support. DoL provides the funding and the Waitakere City Council has employed the people to run it. Settlement Support's 'face-to-face' advisory service is provided out of Waitakere City's four CABs and the CABs refer migrants and refugees on to Settlement Support.

In another example of collaboration, Inland Revenue and Immigration work together to ensure that new immigrants understand their tax obligations. This is included in the information pack that Immigration provides to all new settlers. Although, as noted previously, one respondent would have liked more taxation information provided in the pack.

Other council collaborations

The Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration has been described as a good example of a partnership project between council, local community organisations and central government agencies. In 2004, two new 'Calls to Action' were included; information technology and housing. A gap had been identified in Waitakere around the tenancy services area and so now the first call to action is for access to affordable, appropriate housing. This is managed by an inter-sectoral steering group that has the HNZA regional manager on it. One of its projects is to set up a tenancy advocacy service for both tenants and landlords. The steering group provides a forum

²⁵ <http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/OurPar/collabproj.asp>

to talk about wider housing issues, including rural housing and home ownership and non-traditional services, such as third sector housing innovation.

In Taranaki, the local government councils are working with agencies around youth. For example, MSD is part of the council taskforce that seeks to ensure that unemployed youth under the age of 19 years are either in a job or receiving training or other education. The Stratford District Council indicated that it has built up a good relationship with MSD around the youth transition strategy.

Another example of collaboration was the flooding in South Taranaki (both in 2004 and 2006). The STDC explained that all the agencies came together and located in one place. This was well received by the people as it meant the agencies came to the people instead of the people having to go to the agencies. According to the STDC, the disaster relief programme was very well handled.

“HNZC did a good job at finding emergency housing; Work and Income did a marvellous job at coordinating around emergency benefits and emergency housing. Within two weeks, everyone had been sorted. There were no negative responses from anyone ... Gloria Campbell [Regional Commissioner, MSD] did a great job”.

This was confirmed by one respondent.

“There were several different agencies that helped us, they were very good ... I thought we were generously looked after ... The [South Taranaki District] Council and the Regional Council and the Ministry of Ag did their best to help us as quickly as they could, and they did”. (Taranaki, farmer dealing with a weather event, male)

The STDC noted lessons learned from this experience were to keep listening to each other and that it is possible to adjust services to meet needs, without moving outside policy. “There is flexibility within the system. And people appreciate when agencies are willing to try and find a solution”.

Successful collaboration

A number of agencies and intermediaries identified that the success of collaboration is due to the relationships and networks that both agencies and NGOs have built up. As one senior State servant stated, “Collaboration is best placed when organisations take the time to develop relationships and trust”. Another explained that once relationships are established it becomes easier to work with others and share information.

Others identified that it was also important to know and understand each other’s role. This enabled them to sort out how they can best work together and pass on the other’s information to clients. One senior Police officer in Waitakere informed the researchers that he sets up local level agreements that help in understanding what each agency can bring to the table.

Agencies and intermediaries in Taranaki identified that these relationships and networks are possible due to Taranaki’s contained community. The researchers were frequently told that “everyone knows everyone in Taranaki” and this strengthens networking. These networks ensured agencies thought “outside the square” and their services were not siloed.

It was a similar situation in Christchurch and Waitakere. One agency stated that networks helped them to do their work jointly. Another thought creating a ‘joined-up government’ was hard but agencies were “having a really good go at it” through the CSPIN initiative.

In Waitakere, collaboration is called the ‘Waitakere Way’. This was described as a ground-up, hands-on collaborative way of working together that has been effective in the region. It is an atmosphere “where people want it to work and it does”. People are not able to sit outside the process, “new ones get pulled in”. A number of agencies and intermediaries noted that the Council, and the people who work for it, helps by providing the forum for collaboration and by fostering it. The Council was recognised as being proactive and for having been involved in collaborative work for a long time. As one Council staff member explained, there was a degree of maturity as collaboration work in Waitakere goes back 20 years.

Overcoming barriers to collaboration

Despite the majority of agencies and intermediaries thinking that collaboration was working successfully, a number thought that either it was not working at all or agencies could do better. Some thought that it was inevitable that clients would still have to give information more than once (whether appropriate or not). For example, when clients are changing case managers or a patient is being referred between hospitals or services.

Some agencies maintained that they did not share clients so there was no reason to collaborate or share information. Others did not collect information about their users so there was nothing to share.

Still others highlighted different organisational cultures or barriers within the system, or themselves, which made collaboration difficult. For example, the Police in Waitakere identified that some teachers, afraid of getting a bad reputation for their school, would prefer not to have trouble-makers around, which made it difficult to work together on truancy. Police themselves had different ways of working or used different systems for rating crimes, risk and lethality, which undermined communication. Even the perceptions within the Police were a factor. “Police in North Shore, where they are used to BMWs and white faces, don’t like to come to Waitakere”.

The NDSA identified that the limited pool of trained people wanting to work in the caring services weakened the effectiveness of joint services.

Some intermediaries thought that collaboration was undermined because government agencies underestimated the capability of NGOs. One questioned if the agencies were more concerned with patch protection than collaboration. A couple thought that for some agencies “collaboration is a last resort, if they could do it themselves they would”. Some agencies agreed that there could be a “lessening of patch protectionism”. One business intermediary identified that after sharing information with government agencies about a business they were working with, they lost contact with the client. This made them cautious about passing on further information. Another expressed frustration that it could be weeks before they heard anything back from agencies. This intermediary suggested a feedback loop to keep them informed about joint clients would be helpful.

Other intermediaries also commented on the need for feedback. They noted that it was important for agencies and NGOs to keep communicating, no matter how hard it got, and to keep building trust in each other. One suggestion was for agency staff to attend NGOs’ meetings. This would provide an opportunity for agencies to feed back to those intermediaries or community organisations what is happening around joint clients. Another suggestion was for MoUs between community organisations and government agencies regarding the sharing of information. One intermediary suggested that agencies needed to be mandated to be at the table talking. “It has to be written into policy that they will collaborate”.

Agencies and intermediaries also discussed the cost of collaboration. They considered that there was a need to avoid collaboration for collaboration's sake. There was a "better ability to collaborate when they have a reason to come to the table". Some cautioned that investing time in collaboration should not be a trade-off with their own work. One warned that there was such a thing as "collaboration fatigue". "It's not the number of forums or meetings themselves but making sure there are the people resources for them".

One intermediary stated that at times it felt like they were doing the agency's work for them and not getting paid for it. This intermediary gave the example of Strengthening Families, where they sometimes participate in the meetings but do not get paid for it. However, "government departments are paid to be there".

MSD now provides funding known as the Lead Agency Funding to assist community providers by covering their costs to engage with clients. The funding is paid when community providers take on the role of lead agency in dealing with a family, and enables the lead role to be carried out by NGOs.

One major challenge to collaboration, identified by agencies and intermediaries, is the Privacy Act (1993) or other legislation restricting the sharing of information. Some noted the necessity for this, for example, in order to maintain confidentiality. However, a number of agencies and intermediaries emphasised that it was not so much the Act itself at fault as varying interpretations of the Act. Some agencies were criticised for applying a very strict interpretation of the Act and mistakenly not sharing any information. Others were seen to be hiding behind it and using it as an excuse.

A number of agencies identified that despite privacy provisions there was still room for collaboration and to share data. For many, it was a simple matter of obtaining the client's consent. For others, there is the ability to share information in life-threatening situations or to prevent criminal activity. As Child Youth and Family stated, they would "rather share information and protect, than not share and risk the child". In June 2007, MSD issued guidance around sharing client information. The guidance identifies how and under what circumstances information can be shared and is focused on the interaction between Child Youth and Family and Work and Income.

Another example of sharing information involved MSD alerting Inland Revenue after it saw someone applying for superannuation with a very new tax number who said they had been working in New Zealand. A fraud was later uncovered. MSD explained that alerting Inland Revenue to a new, high IRD number was part of an interim process MSD introduced to prevent false identity-related frauds. This has since been replaced by an automated process.

Agencies can apply to the Privacy Commissioner to authorise government information matching programmes (also called data matching programmes). This process is commonly used to detect fraud in public assistance programmes or to trace people wanted by the State. It can also be used to assist individuals, that is, to identify someone who has not claimed an entitlement. One of the latest programmes authorised HNZC to disclose tenant information to MSD under the HNZC/MSD Benefit Eligibility Match²⁶.

Some agencies have the ability under their legislation to share information. For example, ACC and DoL can share data under the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (2001). However, DoL identified that more work is to be done around privacy issues to allow

²⁶ Annual Report of the Privacy Commissioner for the Year Ended 30 June 2006

more data sharing in relation to business information. Child Youth and Family can share information under the Child, Young Persons and their Families Act (1989) although Child Youth and Family pointed out that it still needed to build trust and be sensible. Immigration's application forms advise the applicants that information provided by them may be shared with other government agencies (that is, those entitled under applicable legislation or in accordance with the authority in the form). They also advise that information provided for sponsorships forms may also be shared with MSD.

Some agencies have protocols around sharing information. One agency believed that some standard protocols across government, spelling out under which circumstances it would be good to share information, was needed. One intermediary wanted agencies to think about the difference sharing information would make and the benefits it would bring to the client – “which is what it's meant to do”.

For a number of agencies and intermediaries, it was important to ensure that the right people were in the right place to make collaboration work well. Generally, this meant senior management or the decision-makers. A couple of intermediaries reflected that often forums would start off at the right level of representation but agencies would find this difficult to maintain. The people then coming along would not have the mandate to make decisions. One intermediary stated that this was the reason the Waitakere Training and Skills programme had been disbanded. Government agencies were sending along their second in commands and the meetings became pointless. However, it was also recommended that the people with the expertise should also be at the table and sometimes this was not the decision-makers but the ones who knew how to make things work on the ground.

One senior manager stated that in terms of collaboration, leadership development needed to include how to be a leader across agencies, as this was quite different to leading teams within your own agency. Others emphasised that in order to maintain collaboration, there had to be enough people. One agency explained that with a small number of people and “a large number of responsibilities, [we] don't want to embark on new initiatives unless we are confident that we are able to maintain our involvement”.

Public management system

The New Zealand public management system ranks well internationally in terms of financial management and integrity and ethical standards of its State servants²⁷. However, agencies identified aspects of the system that hinders collaboration. For example, the Vote system where individual chief executives have separate responsibilities and accountabilities. This was considered to make it hard to commit resources to collaborative projects. The OTS provided an example of how priorities and resourcing for other government departments affects its work. The settlement of Treaty claims is a Government priority and the OTS is now quite sizeable and moving forward fast. Other agencies have not kept up with the pace and their budgets and priorities reflect this. Some have asked OTS to help effect changes within their organisations. OTS supports agencies asking for an increase in their Budget bids.

At the regional level, agencies are often driven by national priorities and few have discretionary spend, the one exception being MSD Regional Commissioners. Some agencies stated that they can end up arguing about who should be funding initiatives. And while they are arguing, users have to go to two different agencies because the funding is coming from two

²⁷ <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/exgreviews/tsy-exgrev-ca-sep06.pdf>

different areas. Then because different agencies operate on different time-scales and priorities, an individual can “get stuck” waiting for a complete service. “Wrapping cannot happen”.

A number of agencies and intermediaries identified that a whole-of-government approach to funding and organising of projects was needed, both at the national and regional level. One suggestion to continue successful collaboration was for departments to move from providing community organisations with annual funding to three-year funding. One staff member from MSD commented that annual funding makes it difficult for community organisations to build a strategic plan around development and capability. One example given of a successful project that has three-year funding is Te Rito Family Violence project. The funding for this project is coming up for renewal.

Agencies also identified that they need to establish joint outcomes and then undertake joint planning to achieve those outcomes. One senior Police officer cited the example of the Northland Ambassador programme, which operated from the Strengthening Families forum, under the umbrella of the Far North Safer Community Council. This was an initiative to reduce the incidences of theft from vehicles in high risk areas. By creating ambassadors out of the long-term unemployed and locating them in tourist areas, they were able to achieve joint outcomes that satisfied MSD, DOC, the local councils, economic agencies and the Police.

A number of agencies in Waitakere suggested that a clear framework is required to guide joint planning. The Waitakere City Council is working towards a multi-stakeholder plan for engaging with central government and local communities to deliver on the community outcomes described in the Long Term Community Council Plan (LTCCP). The Council noted there has been some work done on shared priorities under the MSD Local Service Mapping and the DHB Health Needs Analysis. One senior manager acknowledged that agencies were a long way down the track and there was a lot of support but “they still haven’t cracked it”. The Council observed that the challenge now was to get runs on the board, to undertake small practical projects on the ground that would demonstrate how collaboration can work.

A number of councils and agencies identified that different regional boundaries between central and local government are another barrier to collaboration. Police, Health and territorial local authorities all have different boundaries and this “can be confusing and very difficult when trying to work collaboratively”. The South Taranaki District Council gave the example of people who live in Waverly having to go to the Wanganui DHB, while people 20 kilometres up the road go to the Taranaki DHB in New Plymouth. It maintained there was a need to align boundaries between local authorities, government agencies and health as “aligning boundaries would help the community to understand where they should go for services”.

Other ways to support collaboration

A number of agencies and intermediaries commented that having ICT environments to support collaboration would be useful, for example, shared networks to be able to collect common data and update information. One intermediary observed that it would be helpful if agencies could coordinate around an individual’s appointments on the same day through an appointment sheet on a shared network. DoL explained that most of the data it shared involved business information and it would be useful if other agencies, like ACC, the Companies Office and Inland Revenue, could update DoL’s data to record changes to business information. MSD noted that Family and Community Services (FACS) is implementing online updating of agency and community organisations information later this calendar year to ensure the national directory remains up-to-date.

The three DHBs identified that electronic data sharing and support would enhance the care of patients. For example, having a system that allowed primary providers to see what is happening after sending a patient to secondary care. They would not then have to wait until the person came back to them. Another example would be to dispense drugs to patients in hospital from a pharmacist's electronically supported system, rather than via a nurse, which would reduce the potential for drug error. Nurses could swipe a patient's ID band against a bar code and ensure they got the right drugs. Bar coding intravenous drugs could also reduce drug error.

The DHBs are also investigating a system to avoid unnecessary duplication that captures the whole of an individual's medical record, which can then be shared amongst DHBs and also help with the hand-over to community services. For example, a new development for Princess Margaret Hospital is the InterRai assessment programme that is used in the community to look at the needs of older people. It is done on a computer and flags issues, which can lead to a more detailed assessment. The expectation is that over the next few years everyone over 65 years will have been through an assessment. It will be a standard tool that will be used to provide information to GPs and Aged Care.

The Waitakere Hospital, along with the rest of the Waitematā DHB, currently shares some electronic information across the DHBs of the Auckland region, for example discharge summaries, laboratory results and radiology images/reports. With appropriate access, clinicians at the Waitematā DHB and Counties Manakau DHB can also access the Auckland DHB Clinical Record Information System²⁸ providing electronic access to the patient record. In September 2007, GPs were given access to 'Testsafe' allowing them access to laboratory results from secondary and primary providers.

Customs in Christchurch thought there could be more sharing of assets, including technology, labour resources and shared warehouses. This could help to avoid the double handling of Customs X-raying something then the Aviation Security Service X-raying the same thing.

The Waitakere City Wellbeing Collaboration project's seventh out of nine 'Calls to Action' is "Infotechnology is used by organisations to support the outcomes of wellbeing and collaboration". The Council believes that shared networks will definitely help with service delivery. It gave the example of the Community E-notice board run by Community Waitakere that has proven to be successful. Service users are able to view and add notices online.

Customs also stated that there was some pressure on it to share information further; "Industry is demanding a 'single window' with regards to data". Private industry wants Customs to collect import and export data and provide it to those who need it. Customs is trusted above anyone else to be able to collect and distribute this data. Customs collects and provides trade information to Statistics New Zealand.

A number of agencies identified security issues as barriers to collaboration. ACC in Taranaki identified that there was a reluctance to embrace technology and share information with agencies until secure systems are in place. The Canterbury DHB maintained that without a social security unique identifier, sharing can be difficult. A person may use a different version of their name with different providers and it can be difficult to make sure the right match is being made. The DIA in Christchurch explained that identity verification would overcome some of these barriers.

²⁸ This system involves the digital scanning of all clinical records and documents, which can then be viewed securely by authorised users via a PC at any geographic location across the Auckland DHB network. Authorised staff can also download records to a laptop computer at an off-site location

The proposed Identity Verification Service (IVS) will provide government agencies with a high level of confidence regarding the identity of the online user, while placing people in control of the transaction and protecting their privacy. This is the online equivalent of a person presenting a passport or other proof of identity document in-person to an agency. People who use more than one government service requiring verification of their identity (whether for their own personal use or on behalf of an organisation), will be able to avoid the costs and inconvenience of repeatedly verifying their identity in-person with multiple agencies.

The proposed IVS will be built and operated by DIA with the support of DoL, as part of the All-of-Government Authentication Programme led by the State Services Commission²⁹.

One respondent related how he had contacted the DIA to apply for citizenship for his wife. This has been a slow process and involved the provision of much of the same information that previously had been provided to Immigration.

“Again it was the case of having to prove who we are, what relationship we’re in. The same paperwork really for ... that little bit”. (Christchurch, returning OE, male)

This respondent thought it would be useful to have a system which would reduce the amount of information that needed to be provided.

“It would be nice if it was all one body where you put in an application for this and the idea is that it goes through the stages it needs to go through and each agency does talk to each other, so the person coming into the country through immigration, you need an IRD number, here’s your IRD number ... It would be nice if one agency could handle – not necessarily one agency, have the agencies communicate with each other so when you fill the initial form in, it says on there what your paths want to be and they then go through the process of organising those lines and they get moved to wherever they need to”. (Christchurch, returning OE, male)

A number of intermediaries were interested in the ‘wraparound’ concept of service where one agency was responsible for the client’s total package. “It would be better if we were dealing with one government department rather than three”. This would be similar to the Strengthening Families model. Others favoured the Heartlands model or a local hub with all services located under one roof. One suggestion was to set up a family centre hub, similar to the Whangārei Youth one-stop-shop, with a 24 hour helpline and referral service. The Whangārei initiative is expected to contribute to a reduction in youth offending, improved education and health outcomes and better life opportunities. A number of agencies in Taranaki wanted to see the RIFs model extended and made more effective.

²⁹ <http://www.e.govt.nz/services/authentication/ivs>

Section 3

Effective State Services

Capturing users' experiences and expectations

Agencies use a variety of methods to capture users' experiences and expectations in order to improve service delivery from the users' perspective. Most agencies undertake a process of consultation involving focus groups, advisory groups, consumer groups and the community. As an example, for the Disaster Recovery initiative, MAF held meetings with specific groups then held a public consultation process, consisting of 13 public meetings. MAF also invited formal submissions from the public. Career Services held focus groups to get feedback when updating its website. Inland Revenue use focus groups in piloting new initiatives. User groups were part of the business case to Government when LINZ was looking to deliver the majority of its services on-line.

DOC involves disability groups in developing solutions to improve physical access. For example, people in wheelchairs are used to test facilities when DOC is building them. GSE in Christchurch and Taranaki has parent reference groups to inform their work.

The Canterbury DHB described how on one day it held a large workshop Health Service Planning Project where consumers explained their experiences on accessing services and then the next day there was a meeting with chronic disease management consumers. The Waitematā DHB involves consumers in its senior planning teams as it finds this a more effective method to capture and act on consumer ideas than surveys.

HNZC provided examples of improvements to service delivery as a result of "listening" to the community, for example deciding to work out of the Work and Income offices in Kaiapoi and Rangiora. The Aranui Community Renewal project was another example.

The Waitakere Hospital identified how consultation with the community is an ongoing process to improve the hospital and its services. The needs of the community are captured via Waitakere Health Link, which was formed to develop Waitakere's Health Plan. Waitakere Health Link's members include people from the community, the Council, PHOs and non-government providers. The hospital gave the example of its "innovative team structure", which is "designed to nurture relationships" and fit the hospital departmental design. The structure has recently changed from four ward teams to three to enable the nursing teams to cover staff absence more effectively. This means "bigger teams and less pressure", which "equates to better care for people".

A number of agencies related how they receive feedback from their website through the use of a button clients can select, similar to Career Services. The Christchurch City Council under its 'Contact Us' section has buttons that enable people to give feedback through 'have your say' and 'give us feedback'. MAF has set up email accounts for particular issues, for example animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz and info.biosecurity@maf.govt.nz. It also has an electronic feedback form for biosecurity issues.

Most agencies undertake customer satisfaction surveys either in-house or through external research organisations to identify where and how they can improve their services. For example, DoL carries out its own in-house customer satisfaction survey and draws on external surveys by companies such as KPMG. DoL reported that customer satisfaction is high, but it wants to learn from the customers' experiences, so services continue to improve. DoL also

undertakes surveys of the different access channels to identify the factors that influence people's preferences. For instance, some people prefer electronic access for ease of time, some people prefer to express themselves in writing – mail or email – others prefer the verbal approach through face-to-face contact or by telephone. DoL is hoping that some innovative and different ideas will come out of this project.

Immigration also conducts an annual customer satisfaction survey. The survey measures customer service, timeliness of decisions, fairness and quality. It is sent to an external party to collate the responses and results are fed back to the regional branches. A plan is then implemented where the top three to five areas for improvement are identified for action.

Immigration also conducts a global customer survey every October. This surveys government and external stakeholders (including consultants, institutes). The results are compared year after year. The survey allows DoL to identify where it is doing well, how and why, areas for improvement around customer satisfaction and access to information.

Other agencies identified that they would like to have customer satisfaction surveys, while one agency thought it “could do a better job at understanding user ideas via surveying”. NZTE regularly surveys clients to obtain feedback but identified there is a risk of over-surveying the same pool of clients, something they are looking to manage.

The Police draw on Victoria University's national victimisation surveys to understand the issues that are important to New Zealanders and how to respond to those issues, for example, car crime and burglary. One senior officer in Waitakere stated that he wants to build a performance culture so that individual Police staff want to understand what is going on and respond to it. “We have got to stop staff saying ‘we are too busy’ to deal with low level crimes”. The Police have conducted surveys in Waitakere to establish the drivers of satisfaction (for example, empathy and timeliness). They have also contracted UMR to research people's expectations of the Police as part of the review of the Police Act (1958). The officer in Waitakere also identified that he gets constant feedback from the public and “the ability for people to comment in itself, makes them feel good”.

Agencies also receive feedback through their customer complaints processes. These can be through a number of channels, for example 0800 numbers, websites, emails and letters. The New Plymouth District Council noted how the complaints that go through its call centre are monitored, then actioned and “this has resulted in a reduction of complaints”. Similarly, MSD has a system that records and tracks complaints. A formal investigation then follows. MSD also has a review and appeal process that can result in a review of a case manager's decision. If the client is still not satisfied, they can undergo a benefit review, which is carried out by an independent group of people. If they are still unsatisfied, they can go through to a social security review.

The Environment Court noted that complaints around local authorities are sometimes referred to the Ombudsman. Complaints about the Police go to the independent Police Complaints Authority. However, the Police in Taranaki observed that there are no mechanisms for low level complaints, for instance where Police have been rude or where people have been waiting a long time. Another agency mentioned that it would like to make its complaints process more robust.

Some agencies identified that they do not receive many complaints. However, one agency noted that of the complaints they do receive, these tend to be about the cost of compliance payments being too high or the attitude of particular staff members. On the other hand, some

agencies mentioned that the feedback they receive “shows that we are doing better at delivering services”.

A number of agencies use various monitoring mechanisms to better understand their users’ experiences. For example, the Police in Waitakere measure the time it takes to respond to the number of calls and the lines of people at the front desk. These measures show that there are delays. Consequently, Police are looking at ways to respond to the demand, for instance, adjusting the rosters of staff and staffing levels at the weekends. The Waitemata DHB maps the “individual’s journey to find out what happened, what went well (and not so well) to inform service design”. DoL also measures the whole of the customer’s experience, including how long transactions take and repeat transactions to improve quality of service.

Some intermediaries confirmed that they have participated in consumer forums or provided feedback, but they questioned the value of the process. A number thought that there was good intent and some agencies were recognised for responding to feedback and making significant changes. For example, one intermediary in Christchurch had raised the case to Work and Income and the power company, of older people having their power cut off and suffering. They now all have an agreement of what to do in these cases rather than cutting off the power as a first response.

However, other agencies were seen to be unreceptive and a number of intermediaries commented that they had not seen anything happen after giving feedback. The main observation was that agencies were not good at communicating back the changes they had made. As NZTE confirmed, its surveys show that clients like to be followed up and informed regarding the next steps.

MSD in Taranaki have a motto of ‘Own it, Fix it, Learn from it’. Other examples of improvements to service delivery that agencies have made include:

- Child Youth and Family’s Differential Response Model, which was developed as a result of concerns about the burgeoning demand for investigations
- the single non-emergency number (SNEN), which was the Police’s response to concerns regarding burglary and the time taken to respond to calls
- the Quality, Connected and Accessible service delivery model of the Department of Building and Housing was implemented following initial diagnostic work that included feedback from customers and key external stakeholders.

As previously mentioned, a number of agencies have improved their signage, forms, pamphlets and information based on feedback.

Agencies also undertake research to improve outcomes for their clients. For example, ACC funded an Otago University study into falls (2003/4). A prevention programme based on the learnings was rolled out in an attempt to reduce hospital appointments for over 65 year olds.

Sharing learnings

While some agencies thought that there were limited opportunities to share learnings from their service users and stakeholders with other agencies, others identified both formal and informal mechanisms that support sharing. Informal ways include opportunities that arise as part of normal working contact, particularly for those agencies that work in the same area. For example, Customs mentioned the close collaboration that occurs in the mail centre and at the

airport. Similarly, already established networks, committees and intersectoral forums make it possible to share learnings. The NDSA, as an example, noted that the MoH national committees are opportunities to share experiences. Strengthening Families, CSPIN, RIFs, domestic violence community groups, Safer Communities were further examples.

On a more formal basis, project work enables agencies to share learnings. For DoL, its approach was to learn from other agencies. For example, DoL approached MSD and involved industry people, particularly in the web strategy sector, for help in designing its “contact connected centre”. DoL also approached Inland Revenue to learn from its experience in improving its phone system.

Career Services, when setting up the BTATTDM project, established an external advisory group that includes other departments to share research outcomes and advise on what they are doing.

The Waitakere City Council and STDC noted the importance of debriefing meetings as a platform for learning. For example, there were debriefing meetings following the floods in South Taranaki, which were well attended by agencies, where they talked about what worked well and what did not. The STDC observed that, “out of something bad came something good”.

A number of agencies were looking for forums or avenues for sharing good news stories and best practices. One intermediary in Waitakere thought that it would be good to hear about some success stories to overcome the perceptions that some people have of agencies like Child Youth and Family. Child Youth and Family agreed that there was a need to promote good stories more, “everyone hears the bad ones but not the good ones”. As noted previously, the Regional Commissioner for MSD in Auckland related how one family they had been working with was so happy with the results and support they received from MSD they did not mind their details and story being used for future projects. The lesson learnt from this example was that it was extremely important and helpful to be put onto the people who could help them early. One agency suggested that the SSC should promote excellent case studies.

Conferences, seminars and workshops were identified as effective ways to share learnings. Several agencies mentioned that DevCon, the State Services Senior Leaders Development Conference, was a good opportunity to learn what other agencies are doing in terms of service delivery improvements. The Department of Building and Housing presented its Quality, Connected and Accessible Services project at the conference in 2006. Another agency stated that it had learned about the Public Sector Intranet (PSI) at DevCon. Customs noted that its presentation at DevCon, on its computer system Cusmod, is now on the PSI. Customs also holds joint presentations with, for example, NZTE as an opportunity for sharing experiences.

Joint training programmes are another mechanism. Customs participate in the induction course for new MAF officers. Staff from Princess Margaret Hospital, Police and Child Youth and Family in Christchurch train together, for example, on how to manage psychotic patients. One senior Police officer in Waitakere explained that staff need to be trained to handle situations involving mental health issues. They “have to learn to relate to prisoners as people and not brutalise them”. They are using Massey University's Adams Research that interviews drug users for example and seeks to understand their life experience. For people not used to dealing with Police, this officer wants it to be a good experience. His emphasis for his district is to drive behavioural change internally. A “motivated and resilient workforce” is better placed to deliver better services.

The DHBs have set up regional networks that meet quarterly. Mental Health Services in Christchurch described how on day one, the managers exchange experiences and on day two, they meet with clinical directors to share experiences. Each quarter, a region will conduct a showcase activity and demonstrate innovations. Because populations in each region are different, they look at all the models, and decide what would work and what would not in their regions. Waitakere Hospital explained that the principles that underpin its innovative team structure are to be rolled out in North Shore. The resulting team structure will be adapted to map the shape of North Shore's hospital, which is a tower block. DHBs also share best practice nationally through District Health Boards New Zealand, the representative body for all DHBs.

Other opportunities for sharing include magazines, newsletters and videos. For example, HNZN in Waitakere use newsletters to look at what agencies in other regions are doing and learn from them, and also to recognise when HNZN is leading. The MSD has developed and promoted a video of the Heartland Services, which also featured at DevCon.

One agency identified the SSC leadership forums as a useful avenue. Secondments from other agencies are another option.

The Waitakere City Council thought that introducing a paper on territorial local authorities as part of the planning degree at university would be worthwhile.

A number of agencies noted that many international organisations are also interested in what New Zealand is doing. For example, the Waitakere Hospital was a finalist in the Waitakere Business Awards and its signage was a finalist in the innovation awards. They also won a Green Award in Eco Awards which resulted in a group from Texas, USA publishing Waitakere's experience of building an eco-friendly hospital in a reference book which is available world-wide. The hospital regularly receives other national and international hospital groups for tours.

Some agencies commented on the lack of shared networks and identified that there was potential to use wikis and shared workplaces, like the PSI, to share information and experiences.

Improving accessibility

Agencies and intermediaries were asked what three things could agencies do to improve access to their services. A number of agencies identified that they have a culture of continuous improvement and they were always seeking to review and learn. The top six areas that received the most comments from agencies and intermediaries, and were confirmed by what the service user respondents said, were selected for comment in this report.

Promoting awareness

Agencies, intermediaries and respondents emphasised that awareness was the key to improving access. This includes keeping other State Services agencies informed about each others services. If there is greater awareness of what agencies do, they will be more likely to increase the number of people through their doors. Agencies need to be more proactive about promoting awareness of their services and raising public awareness about rights, entitlements and obligations. This means making information available across a range of channels. Suggestions included:

- providing information in key locations, for example, schools and GPs' rooms

- rural bulletins
- community newspapers
- multi-media campaigns to raise the profiles of agencies, including good news stories.

One intermediary suggested that rather than agencies producing their own pamphlets, agencies could together provide resources containing information across a number of agencies. A good example of this is *A Place to Live: He Wāhi Noho* produced by the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. This resource includes information on the services of the DHBs, HNZC, Department of Building and Housing and Work and Income; including people's rights and obligations.

Agencies also need to ensure that their information is up-to-date, user-friendly, clear, concise and in plain English. As one agency explained, the average reading age is 12 years so agencies need to operate on that basis to ensure their information is user-friendly.

Some agencies observed that raising awareness includes improving their signage, as some people could not even find their building. However, as one agency indicated, promoting their services more needs to be balanced by the level of service provided.

Access and ICT

A number of agencies identified that improving services meant ensuring 24/7 access across multiple channels. For some of these agencies this meant upgrading and enhancing their website so more services could be accessed online. It also means ensuring their website is user-friendly and useful. People also need to have access to computers and the Internet. One suggestion to help those without Internet access is to install kiosks in key locations, like the Courts buildings.

Other issues include security and identity verification to enable those services, which at the moment are still largely paper-based, to be accessed online or via email.

Some agencies that do not have an 0800 number identified that having one would improve service delivery for users. Others noted that some 0800 numbers do not take calls from cell phones, which would, once again, be beneficial for service users.

MSD noted that it was about to start using voice recognition to verify clients over the phone. Work and Income in Waitakere talked about changing the nature of its contact centre. The contact centre is evolving from an "appointment type" model only to one that provides outbound calling to targeted client groups, promoting products and services. For example, calling superannuitants to make sure they are aware of tax code changes. This approach would ensure that "Work and Income is being more responsive".

Police thought that a national single non-emergency number will lead to a major change in accessing services. NDSA recommended a Mental Health Line that provides immediate assistance from a medical professional.

MED in Christchurch suggested introducing an all-of-government contact centre to be a client's single point of contact. The Ministry observed that today's network and voice-over internet protocol (VOIP) technology could support seamless connections between various agencies to provide clients with a single virtual voice portal supported in practice by the expertise within various agencies.

Intermediaries just wanted to ensure that “human beings [were] on the phone”. Agencies and intermediaries also thought that having a more visible presence, for example, face-to-face clinics will improve clients’ access to their services.

A whole-of-government approach

A number of agencies and intermediaries identified that a whole-of-government approach was important as complex issues cannot be solved by one agency alone. “All agencies are responsible for solving the problems”. For this to happen, there would need to be a breaking down of the barriers and competition between agencies. It will also involve agencies recognising Government priorities and undertaking joint planning towards achieving joint outcomes.

The MoE in Waitakere explained that agencies need to improve the way they work collaboratively so that collaboration is not just based on the personal commitment and knowledge of individuals. A number of agencies identified that continuing to improve relationships and connections through interagency forums is an essential part of working together to improve services.

Some agencies recommended standardising systems in order to share information with other relevant organisations. For example, DHBs want to be able to share information with PHOs to improve efficiency. The Waitakere Hospital suggested that wireless services or electronic referrals will be beneficial; for one thing, it will cut down on paperwork. The hospital noted that there are already some electronic referrals, for instance X-rays, which can be viewed on the PAX system so there is no need to print them.

Co-location

Agencies and intermediaries suggested increasing access to services by housing agencies under the same roof in one-stop shops and ensuring the location was accessible for users. A number of agencies in Waitakere and Taranaki wanted Heartland centres, which had started off as a service for people in rural areas, located in their urban centres as well. GSE in Taranaki suggested that one-stop shops will increase multi-agency collaboration as housing all the key agencies in one place “would break down intra and interagency silos”. It also recommended having “lots of parking” for the public and not being housed in a high-rise building.

Several agencies recommended co-locating with non-government providers as well, in order to deliver services in the community together. Community organisations will gain a “better understanding of the barriers facing government” and will be in a better position to provide “information for clients so that people are making fully-informed decisions”.

Staff

Agencies and intermediaries indicated that the calibre of staff impacts on users’ experiences. A number thought that a lot of the problems that arise may not occur if there were more experienced or well-trained staff interacting with the public. One intermediary recommended that all agencies should train their staff to be “more aware, responsive and culturally sensitive”. They wanted agency staff to “stop treating people who come to the counter as time-wasters. To be faster, more efficient and less condescending”.

Some agencies and intermediaries identified the skills necessary for working with people. These include relationship management skills in order to build and maintain relationships with both users and other agencies. In addition, staff should have people skills. These were described as being able to communicate, understand and listen to people. In other words,

empathising with the needs of their clients. It also includes a passion and commitment for working with people.

A couple of senior managers commented on the need to attract the right people to the job in a tight labour market. They wanted experienced, well-qualified people or at least those prepared to learn. For example, Child Youth and Family and the PSA have established a working party so that Child Youth and Family is seen as an employer of choice for social workers at the end of their training. Both managers noted that remuneration then becomes an issue.

One agency identified the importance of quality leaders “committed to the greater good”. It observed that the quality of service is related to the “visions and values” of an organisation and these “flow down through an organisation from the top”.

Intermediaries

Finally, both intermediaries and agencies commented on the need for more cooperation between State Services agencies and non-government organisations. Agencies should work constructively with private sector organisations, community groups or other service providers (such as PHOs) to fill the gaps or reach eligible non-users, rather than the agencies trying to do it all themselves.

As one way of increasing understanding and collaboration between agencies and NGOs, MSD in Waitakere mentioned the Social Work Study Awards. The awards are for employees of NGOs who have previously studied, or are currently studying, for a social work qualification that meets the educational requirements for Social Worker Registration. The awards are administered by Family and Community Services, a service line of the MSD.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Agencies' updates on case studies

This appendix has been added to record details of specific changes to policies or procedures that have occurred since the events discussed in the case study research. Agencies were asked to provide specific text, not already dealt with in the report, for inclusion in this appendix.

3.9 Taranaki Case Study – Farmer dealing with major weather event

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Page 75 – Since the 2004 floods, the MAF has reviewed the Government recovery policy, which has tightened the parameters around financial assistance, and clarified what other assistance is available. There has been no real change in MAF's accessibility but it has publicised the new recovery policy.

MAF is also working to set up Rural Trusts around the country, including in Taranaki, which will materially assist the rural community during an adverse event, and speed up recovery afterwards.

3.13 Taranaki Case Study – Treaty settlement process

Ministry of Economic Development

Page 107 – Section 8(2) and (3) of the Crown Minerals Act 1991 permits these types of reasonable domestic mineral takes (at least the Crown allocation aspects). Section 8(2) says that people do not need a permit to take any minerals (includes stones) from their own land as an owner or occupier for their reasonable building, domestic, road making, etc uses (hāngī stones would be covered under "domestic"). Section 8(3) permits extraction of natural material (hāngī stones) from riverbeds and the coastal marine area (which would probably be the other main source locations for hāngī stones) without needing a permit from Crown Minerals.

Te Puni Kōkiri

Page 108 – TPK's involvement in the Treaty settlements process spans the full length of the negotiations, is significant and wide-ranging but this is not always fully appreciated by hui participants, claimant groups and the general public.

TPK has a specific role in the mandating and ratification of post-settlement entity phases of the process, which involves considerable interaction with many different stakeholders including claimant groups.

The claims definition is an important part of a Treaty settlement and TPK provides advice to claimants and the Office of Treaty Settlements on this issue as appropriate during the pre-mandate period. Its purpose is not primarily to limit future liability to the Crown but to ensure that the Crown is negotiating with the correct people to settle particular claims. TPK's involvement and interaction with claimants groups should not be misconstrued as limited to a single hui on claims definition.

3.19 Waitakere case study – Person who has recently obtained a protection order

Legal Services Agency

Page 156 – The \$50 contribution cost to legal aid services no longer applies as the regulation that stipulated this was revoked on 1 March 2007 by regulation 19(1) of the Legal Services Regulations 2006.

3.22 Waitakere case study – Small import business looking to expand

Te Puni Kōkiri

Page 182 – TPK had contracted Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust to provide business mentoring services as part of the Ministry's Māori Business Facilitation Service. The Waipareira Trust's contract was for a 12 month period. However, the contract was not renewed at its conclusion due to performance issues, and the particular case study should not be taken as indicative of the service provided by the Māori Business Facilitation Service. Recent evaluations of the service have assessed it as being effective in the provision of services. Further, the Māori Business Facilitation Service was judged the winner, at the *Vero Excellent in Business Awards* in 2006, of the award for the most significant contribution by a public-private sector partnership.

Accident Compensation Corporation

ACC has worked hard over the past year to improve claimant satisfaction, which has risen overall from 77% in 2005-2006 to 82% in 2006-2007. The initiatives undertaken included:

- tracking inbound and outbound calls to claimants and promoting proactive rehabilitation and communication with claimants (to address poor communication and service delays)
- reviewing ACC's forms, letters and fact sheets (addressing poor communication)
- implementing the Service Recovery framework (addressing poor service from staff and poor communication)
- developing a staff capability strategy.

The number of complains referred to the Office of the Complaints investigator has fallen 44% in the past year. Satisfaction increased for all claimant groups and met targets with the exception of Māori claimants. Implementation of the Māori Access Strategy will result in improved services for Māori, which in turn will drive better results in Māori claimant satisfaction.

An independent survey of the level of public trust and confidence is undertaken quarterly. The survey results showed a steady rise in trust and confidence, from 44% at June 2006 to 53% at June 2007 – a significant improvement on the target of 46% for 2007.

3.5 Christchurch case study – ACC workplace injury

ACC has introduced CoverPlus Extra for self employed people. It guarantees a level of weekly compensation, agreed in advance with ACC, if the person is unable to work as the result of an injury. The level of cover can be tailored to suit personal circumstances. In the event of making a claim, there is no need to prove earnings, as the weekly compensation has already been agreed. The self employed person receives 100% of the amount of weekly compensation purchased until they are fit for full-time work.

3.14 New Plymouth case study – ACC workplace injury

This case was managed by an accredited employer who is responsible for management of its own claims and is not illustrative of ACC's approach and systems.

Appendix 2: Interview questions for agencies

Accessible State Services

1 Who's knocking at the door?

How do you identify who should be getting services but are not?

2 Are doors open for users?

What are the barriers to accessing your services, and how do you know?

3 Are users welcomed?

In what ways is a spirit of service evident when staff engage with users?

4 Facilitating Access

(a) How do you promote awareness of your services, including peoples' entitlements and obligations?

(b) How do you ensure your information is easy to understand and accessible?

(c) What other ways do you tailor your services to target non-users?

(d) If people use a mix of channels or methods to access your services, how do you ensure consistency of information across the channels?

Responsive State Services

5 No wrong door

(a) What mechanisms do you use to direct people to services appropriate to their needs, either within your agency, or to other organisations?

(b) In what other ways do you collaborate with other organisations around joint clients, including initiatives that enable users to give information only once?

(c) What can be done to overcome barriers to collaboration? (e.g. information sharing around joint clients)

Effective State Services

6 Are there opportunities for improvement?

(a) What changes have been made to improve service delivery as a result of capturing users' experiences and expectations?

(b) What opportunities are there to share your learnings with other agencies?

7 Finally

What three things would you do to improve the access to your services?

Appendix 3: List of agencies and organisations interviewed

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)	Ministry of Economic Development (MED)
Age Concern Canterbury	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Age Concern Taranaki	Ministry of Justice
Archives New Zealand	Ministry of Social Development (MSD)
Canterbury Development Corporation	New Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau
Canterbury District Health Board	New Plymouth District Council (NPDC)
Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce	New Zealand Customs Service
Career Services	NZ Ethnic Social Services Trust, Waitakere
CCS Christchurch	New Zealand Police
Christchurch City Council	New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE)
Citizens Advice Bureau, Massey	Salvation Army, Hawera
Communities Waitakere	Settlement Support, Waitakere
Community Law Canterbury	South Taranaki District Council (STDC)
Department of Building and Housing	Stratford District Council (SDC)
Department of Conservation (DOC)	Taranaki Community Law Centre Trust
Department of Internal Affairs (DIA)	Taranaki District Health Board
Department of Labour (DoL)	Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK)
Federated Farmers	Waitakere City Council
Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC)	Waitakere Community Law Service
Inland Revenue	Waitakere Enterprise
Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)	Waitematā District Health Board
Legal Services Agency (LSA)	WAVES Waitakere
Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry (MAF)	Women's Refuge Christchurch

Acronyms used in this report

AMS	Application Management System	MfE	Ministry for the Environment
BTATTDM	Better Tertiary and Trade Training Decision Making	MoH	Ministry of Health
CAB	Citizen Advice Bureau	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
CSPIN	Christchurch Social Policy Interagency Network	NDSA	Northern DHB Support Agency
DevCon	Development Conference	NGO	Non Government Organisation
DHB	District Health Board	NOW	New Out West
DRM	Differential Response Model	OTS	Office of Treaty Settlements
ERO	Education Review Office	PHO	Primary Health Organisation
FACS	Family and Community Services	PSA	Public Service Association
GP	General Practitioner	PSI	Public Service Intranet
GSE	Special Education grouping of the Ministry of Education	RIF	Regional Intersectoral Forum
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	RMA	Resource Management Act
IVS	Identity Verification Service	SNEN	Single non-emergency number
LEED	Linked Employer-Employee Data	VOIP	Voice-over internet protocol
LTCCP	Long Term Community Council Plan	VSD	Virtual Service Delivery

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