



Monthly News September 2012

Tena Koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei,
Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri, Greetings to all!



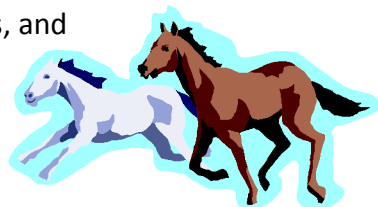
Data base: 5200 Whanau/Family Carers.

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From the National Office: Your Voices

It's been one of those days

Today I tried to mow the lawn, the mower would not start. I tried to go on a bike ride with my grandchild and my bike trailer tire needs a new tube. My van has standing water in it from the rain and smells mouldy, and this afternoon when I wanted to do something with my horses, and my grandchild demanded my attention. Some days I just don't understand the unfolding of events. I am so limited in what I can do. Between finances, time, and having a three year-old, there is little of what I had planned on doing, actually getting done. Don't get me wrong, I love her. It is just I see my life as on the downward slide, for a limited time. Oh, don't let me forget the fact I have possums moving into my house. Yes some days it just seems everything goes wrong and life is the pits. Then a little voice says Grandma I love you, and a hug follows and everything is brought back into perspective, because that is really all that matters.



Granny B

A bit of history to fill you in

Poor hubby had to drop the three (5.10, 4.10 and 2.7 years) at primary and kindergarten for the past few weeks – and fetch them again in the afternoons. Life was just too hectic for me who is busy training to be a secondary teacher and have to be at my assigned secondary school in the morning and you're never sure that you might leave at the same time in the afternoons. This is a one year course and I will finish in November, but the year seems to drag on at times. I now have a two week break and am picking up kids and dropping them off. Studies in your fifties with three littlies certainly are different to when you were younger.

Life in the car never ceases to amaze me with what they sometimes come up with. The boys learnt the words to "Shosholoza" which is a traditional miner's song, originally sung by Black miners in the old

Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. These men travelled by steam train to work in the diamond and gold mines in South Africa. The song is about a longing for home when they are working.

Master 4 also learnt the words to “Cottonfields” by CCR and taught his elder brother to sing it. The latter song was written by “Lead Belly”, an African American Folk and Blues Musician who grew up on a plantation in Louisiana.

Strange the resemblance between the two songs as it is a longing for home. Home where you are loved, being nurtured and cared for.

Trip in the car on the way home

Now, picture this in the car, two boys singing “Shosholozza” and an already screaming 2 year old sister when I fastened the seatbelt of her car seat at kindergarten – yelling on the top of her voice for her “blanky”. The scene changed as we went passed the local Baptist Church. She then yelled “I want to go to church! I want to go to church!” the boys stopped singing and were laughing their heads off as they knew it was Tuesday late afternoon! Her antics were just an extension of what started that morning when she did not want to get dressed.

We Skype my parents who live in South Africa Miss 2.7 kept reaching for my laptop and yelled “I want to go to Africa! I want Poppa and Gran!”



This morning

I decided to keep all three at home this morning, instead of kindy & holiday programs. Eldest brother is at home, middle brother is still recovering from the consequences when he last saw his parents and little Miss is teething and just being a natural 2.7 year old. This morning I asked her “Do you want to stay with Nana or do you want to go to kindy?” Her response bowled me over “Noooo, I want to go to church.” Hmmm, I wonder what’s up with her as she seems to have a serious longing for something spiritual.

Nan M & Poppa E

It is interesting to note that our data base contains members from all over the world living here in NZ, Indian, English, Australians, Canadians, American’s , we are seeing a notable increase in grandparents from South Africa too.

Manners:

Miss 17 year old was on school work experience. She took her lunch and at lunch time was told she could go into the staff room and eat lunch with other staff. After finishing and without a thought she automatically asked, ‘May I leave the table please’ said she was just so embarrassed but the staff were grinning from ear to ear. Yes she lives with her grandparents!

Our GRG Support group meeting:



For over 10 years I have been attending these meetings. Sometimes we have a speaker or more often than not it is our Co telling us what is happening with other information. Something happened at our last meeting that was totally out of the box. We began talking about ‘other’ stuff nothing that was remotely close to our situations;

Subjects danced around the room from Coronation St to Dr. Paul and Portia Faces Life (radio serials from when we were all young women) the humour that abounded was just so fantastic, we laughed and laughed! A few that are normally quiet became most animated. Information is great, but sometimes a good belly laugh is just as important. I came away happy and thoroughly enjoyed myself as did the others.

Advice:

If you suspect your grandchild may have been abused upon return to your care here are the steps:

- Ambulance first if necessary.
- Phone CYF immediately on 0508 326 459 report and ask for response time. Under CYF or not.
- Next get child to Doctor/after-hours clinic or local hospital for medical exam and photographic evidence.
- No local hospital or emergency clinic open go to Local Police station and report with child they have a family violence team.

Some of our heroes:



Teresa and Roger Van Kuylenburg Are a grand parenting couple who raise 6 moko. Their autistic boy Manaia is 8 and the youngest Mathias is 6 who has Asperger's syndrome, the oldest moko Takawai 16, then they have Pat 15, Teresa 11 and Phoenix 10 (Female). They have had these taonga for 8 years, and Teresa still finds time to run her Mangere GRG support group and both are Pastors in their Church. They



work together as a team and support each other and their grandchildren to the hilt. They are a lovely couple who are so devoted to their moko and the GRG Trust and the work we do. Both are more than willing to front up should there be need for any media coverage where a GRG family is needed, and in fact featured in the recent Close Up TV item.

Congratulations to you both, always a smile no matter how tough things may get.



Betty Cornelius runs a sister organisation in Canada called Cangrands, National Kinship Support. I had the pleasure of meeting her in New York in 2007 when we were both key note speakers at the first International Grandparents Raising Grandchildren conference. We have kept in contact since. She lets us know: Well my lovely granddaughter, Asheleigh is all done school and heads off to Durham College in Sept. to study to become a law clerk!

Asheleigh got the Highest Scholastic standing for top College bound student (\$\$) as well as made the Ontario Scholars list (medal)!

Not bad for a child with her history of parental abuse, health issues and for being FASD! (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) No one is prouder of her than I am! I love you so much Asheleigh.

Wow fantastic effort on both your parts!

Reminder:

If you need to take 'anything' to CYF, W& I or IRD keep photocopies, you would be surprised how often these things get "LOST"

Hamilton Members:

Our Co for your area is working very hard to get a support group in your area up and running. As one knows under the Privacy Act we cannot just pass on your details without you saying we can. Kerry would like to make direct contact with you to let you know what is happening in your area. If you are agreeable

to me passing on your details can you email giving me permission office@grg.org.nz or ph 0800 472 637 ext 1. Much appreciated good people.

Recent Herald Media:



MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO HERALD ARTICLE, (below.) August.

Media have recently made some major errors reporting on welfare reforms in respect to grandparents who are caring for children. The fact is, most grandparents caring for children will be largely unaffected by welfare reforms. Those receiving Superannuation will not be affected, those receiving Invalid's Benefits will not be affected and those just receiving Unsupported Child Benefit or Orphans Benefit will not be affected. Those receiving Unemployment Benefit will also be unaffected and will generally continue to have full time work expectations.

Sole parents (also caring for grandchildren) receiving the DPB could be affected, if for example the youngest child is 14 years or older they will be expected to be available and looking for full time work. When the youngest child included on their benefit is aged five to fourteen, they will be expected to be available and looking for part time work.

Thank you for writing.

Kind regards

Natalie Hansen

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May we suggest you copy /keep this letter above (we have been given permission to reproduce this) and take with you to W & I should you be called in to see them. GRG understands you WILL be getting a letter about this in August, but at our meetings with W & I they tell us do not panic you do not have to do anything yet.

NZ HERALD ARTICLE. July:

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

People who have taken in their neglected grandchildren are among the \$2000-a-week beneficiaries who will be returning to work under welfare reforms, passed through Parliament this week.

The Ministry of Social Development has opened the case files of the New Zealanders collecting support of between \$1300 and \$2190 a week.

The document, titled Top 50 Highest Paid Clients, was released under the Official Information Act, with identifying details blacked out to protect privacy.

In the list were 20 grandparents raising children who would otherwise be wards of the state.

It included a 60-year-old East Coast grandparent, the second highest paid, with nine grandchildren - several of whom have disabilities. Their partner works full-time so the couple do not receive any unemployment benefits.

The grandparent receives \$1822 each week in Unsupported Child Benefit, for people caring for children who are not their own. They have received this for 10 years. The case notes state the family is living in crowded conditions and Housing New Zealand is looking for a larger house. It also states: "All children are

in school and doing well."

The third highest was an Auckland, 53, with eight grandchildren and a partner who receives an invalid's benefit. According to the case notes, this person takes care of the entire family but will have part-time work from October.

At number seven on the list is a 55-year-old woman raising three children, alongside five grandchildren. One of the children is eligible for a disability allowance for a serious disability. The extra \$45.34 a week will be reviewed in September.

The woman receives \$1682 a week in benefits but the "Future Focus" programme requires her to seek part-time work.

Number 10 is another single parent/grandparent. The family - one adult, their child and six grandchildren - live in the Waikato on \$1610 a week. She has full-time work obligations and is due to start an introduction course for nursing next week.

Expectations will soon get tougher after this first phase was passed.

Social Development Minister Paula Bennett's staff have indicated case managers will be able to apply exemptions on compassionate grounds but the changes do away with the Domestic Purposes Benefit. The Government has forecast the reforms will cost \$130 million a year though will save \$1 billion over four years.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren chief executive Geoff Lawson said many grandparents already struggled to receive assistance and the organisation expected its advocacy service to be stretched by the reforms.

"It's shameful. Ask any reasonable person whether a grandmother looking after six grandchildren should go find work. It's an indictment on our society," said Lawson.

Final decisions were yet to be made on the second phase of reform, focused on moving sickness beneficiaries into the new Jobseeker category.

Rotorua People's Advocacy Centre spokesman Paul Blair said he believed the reforms would lead to a "searching the garbage" level of poverty.

"The [reforms] are ugly. It reads like the Crimes Act. The people who are on it are treated like criminals.

"What's so sad about it is there's a lot of people egging Paula Bennett on. There's going to be people living on the streets going through rubbish to feed their kids," said Blair.

"These are the future All Blacks, doctors and lawyers of New Zealand and she wants to starve them."

Grandchildren not officially under CYF:

Please keep this article for future reference

Just because Child Youth & Family are involved with your grand/kin children it does not mean necessarily that they are under the Care & Protection of CYF. Sometimes we take them in before CYF get involved. In both these scenarios you may be entitled to Unsupported Child Benefit from Work & Income.

Often children may come to the **attention of CYF** and they then place them in a 'safe' home which very well may mean with you, no orders taken out on the children, (side-wards shuffle, as we call it) therefore they technically and legally are not under the care and protection of CYF, you are deemed as an approved caregiver and under this scenario you may be able to get Unsupported Child Benefit from Work & Income provided you are expecting to care for the next 12 months and you can prove Family Breakdown has taken place. May we suggest you give the name of the CYF social worker who placed children with you (if this is the case) to your Case Manager from W & I. When we are thrust into these situations often we are not thinking straight, but we must get an understanding of what is happening.

The **Unsupported Child's Benefit** can help support the child when their parents can't support them because of a family breakdown. We can grant you financial assistance from the date you first contact us, if you complete your application within 20 working days of that date.

Questions to ask if CYF informally involved: (From Tricia Corin GRG Field Officer)
Family Group Conference. FCG.

- This is the opportunity when you have CYF attention to find out exactly what is happening.
- You need to get a copy of all orders made by the Family Court if any.
- You need to know how long the child/children are going to be in your care, and what will happen after this

A lot have the child/ren for 3 to 6 then another FGC this is a concern as to gain UCB it needs to be likely that you will have the children for at least 12 months.

Also what Grand's need to realise is that in order to get the UCB they need to have copies of FGC's to take to W&I.

Relevant documentation from CYF, obtained by you (the client,) to prove a family breakdown has occurred include:

- a copy of the Family Group Conference outcome
- copies of all, if any, current Court Orders in respect of the child
- a copy of the court-approved Plan

These documents confirm current care arrangements and also include future care arrangements, including the reason that the child has come into your (the client's) care.

The ones that worry me the most are the ones that fall under the sides-wards shuffle as we say. These are the ones that are not getting Board Payments or the UCB. And I believe are the in the majority.

Work and Income Policy guidelines says:

Family Breakdown

In all cases of Unsupported Childs Benefit W & I must be satisfied that a breakdown in the child's family has occurred and is of a medium to long-term nature.

The applicant must be likely to be the principal caregiver for at least one year. This would indicate that the breakdown and the placement away from the child's family is not simply a short-term measure.

Note if you believe any child has been, or is likely to be harmed (physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived, the case must be referred to CYF.

In all other circumstances a Family Meeting must be held if the child is under 14 years of age or they must be referred to an Independent Assessment Provider if they are older than 14.

1. CYF or other authorised agency involvement

At the interview with the caregiver Work & Income will want to find out whether there has been any involvement with CYF or other authorised agency.

Proof of a breakdown from can be obtained from:

- a Family Group Conference conducted by CYF (or other authorised agency) or

- if there has been no involvement with CYF (or other authorised agency) a family meeting that has been conducted by Work and Income

2. **CYF Documentation**

Documentation of the Family Group Conference must be approved and signed as a full and correct account of the meeting by a social worker or an elder of the iwi or cultural service who attended the meeting.

Note the Family Group Conference may have been a hui or cultural service meeting that discussed other matters not relevant to this child and their family. In these situations, only an extract of the relevant minutes of the hui or meeting is required. The extract will still need to be approved and signed by a social worker or an elder of the iwi or cultural service who attended the meeting. When proof of a Family Group Conference has been received by CYF, they must make the decision on the information provided. However, just because a Family Group Conference has been completed does not mean a breakdown has occurred.

3. **What is a breakdown in the child's family**

The breakdown of a child's family involves a failure or collapse of the normal family dynamics that results in no natural, adoptive, or step-parent being able to fulfill their role as parents to their child or children.

Note not all traumatic events within a family will result in a breakdown of a child's family.

4. **Family able to support**

In times of a crisis, a child may not be able to reside with their parents therefore close family members or friends may take care of the child. The new caregivers should look to the child's parents in the first instance for financial support. The parents could still be able to support the child financially. A crisis does not necessarily mean a breakdown of the child's family. In addition, there is a possibility that the child may not be likely to be in that applicant's care for at least one year.

5. **Client would like to be the primary caregiver**

Where a person (for example a grandparent) would like to be the child's primary caregiver but there is a natural, adoptive or step-parent able to provide care for the child, it would not be appropriate to consider Unsupported Childs Benefit.

Determining family breakdown

Unless there has been recent CYF, or other authorised agency involvement, a Family Meeting must be held if the child is under 14 years of age or they must be referred to an Independent Assessment Provider if they are older than 14 to assess family breakdown.

Any CYF or other authorised agency documentation or the Independent Assessment Provider report can assist to make a decision considering all relevant information.

6.

7. **Breakdown in the child's family cannot be established**

If a breakdown in the child's family cannot be established the client cannot receive Unsupported Childs Benefit. The client should:

- ask the child's parent to contribute financially to the care and support of the child
- apply for Child Support through the Inland Revenue Department **or**
- include the child in their benefit

Note the child must meet the definition of a dependent child to be included in the client's benefit and you may be required to apply for child support.

8. **Family Meeting**

A Family Meeting must be held for Unsupported Childs Benefit to confirm that the parent is unable to care for the child or provide fully for the child's support because of a family breakdown when the child is less than 14 years of age.

It is held between:

- the child's caregiver
- the child's parents **and**
- a Work and Income representative

Note if the applicant refuses to allow the parents to be interviewed without a satisfactory reason, and you do not have sufficient information to determine entitlement, may be declined.

Sometimes, the child, the social worker and the extended family may attend.

A family meeting is **not** required where:

- a Family Group Conference conducted by CYF has decided to place the child with the caregiver
- the parents are overseas on a long-term basis **or**
- the parents are in prison

Note a family meeting is not required for Orphans Benefit. When the child is more than 14 years old they must be referred to an Independent Assessment Provider.

9. **Purpose of the meeting**

The purpose of the family meeting is to find out:

- **if a breakdown in the child's family has taken place.** This can be found out by asking about the parents' financial and housing situation, or if they have any disabilities. (The parents are not expected to provide proof of their financial circumstances.)
- whether the parents are able but unwilling to provide full support for the child
- why (due to the breakdown) the child's natural, adoptive or step-parent is unable to provide fully for the child
- the period the parent(s) are unable to provide fully for the child
- how long the caregiver is likely to have the child in their care
- what the caregiver's responsibilities are

Note that the meeting is not the time to discuss the best place for the child, resolve family problems or resolve care and protection issues.

10. **Information Work & Income should give at the meeting:**

- provide the parents and caregiver with the opportunity to consider the information that is given to them in the meeting and decide whether to continue with the application
- explain that if Unsupported Childs Benefit is granted the purpose of the benefit money is to provide for the child in terms of educating, aiding and maintaining the child
- advise that the parents are required to pay Child Support through Inland Revenue Child Support
- explain the alternative to Unsupported Childs Benefit

- explain that under family law, the parents keep the legal right to make decisions about their child and the caregiver has the day to day care of the child

Note when the child is more than 14 years old they must be referred to an Independent Assessment Provider.

11. Independent Assessment Provider

The Unsupported Childs Benefit Assessment Provider is required to provide an assessment and recommendation to Work and Income for Unsupported Childs Benefit applicants when the child is 14 years or older. The purpose is to determine if there has been a family breakdown.

Exception When there has been recent CYF or other authorised agency involvement, or the child is younger than 14 years of age, an assessment is not required.

12. Involving parents

In all cases the Independent Assessment Provider will invite the parents to discuss the application. Consent is not required from the applicant as section 12 of the Social Security Act 1964 allows Work and Income to investigate a claim for benefit to determine entitlement. If the applicant refuses to allow the parents to be interviewed without a satisfactory reason, and you do not have sufficient information to determine entitlement you must advise them their application will be declined.

The parent's invitation can be made by phone but must be followed up with a letter. When the parents cannot be reached and do not make contact a further attempt must be made. Where the parents still do not make contact or refuse to participate in the assessment other significant family members, adults or community groups (for example school counselors) will be contacted. The Independent Assessment Provider will detail all contact and attempts at contact in the Unsupported Childs Benefit assessment report.

Parental involvement is **not** required where:

- Care and protection issues have been identified
- the parents are overseas on a long-term basis **or**
- the parents are in prison

13. Disputes about recommendations made by the Independent Assessment Provider

Work and Income decides who can receive an Unsupported Childs Benefit using information received in the assessment report and the recommendation of the Independent Assessment Provider.

If there are concerns about the recommendations made by the Independent Assessment Provider Work & Income will discuss these concerns with them.

14. Request to access the Unsupported Childs Benefit assessment report

The Unsupported Childs Benefit assessment report remains confidential to Work and Income. If a parent or client requests a copy of the Unsupported Childs Benefit assessment report, they can make a request to Work and Income.

When considering releasing information from the report you should contact your local solicitor.

15. Legislation

- Investigation of claims and grant of benefits [section 12](#) Social Security Act 1964
- Unsupported Child's Benefit Section 29 Social Security Act 1964
- Orphans Benefit Section 28 Social Security Act 1964

- section 27(1) Official Information Act 1982
- section 29(1) Privacy Act 1993
- principle 6 Privacy Act 1993

16. Parents do not attend

If parents are unwilling to attend the family meeting, they cannot be forced to. They must be encouraged to come as it is in the child's best interests that they do.

If parents remain unwilling to come, decide whether there are any issues that need to be looked at by CYF.

There may be a genuine reason why parents cannot come to the family meeting. They may be sick or disabled, or unable to get leave from work.

When parents do not attend the Family Meeting, Work & Income must try and contact them to confirm that they are unable to care for their child.

You can do this by:

- writing to them and asking for information
- arranging for them to be interviewed at another service centre (if they live in another location) **or**
- interviewing them at their home (if they request this)

If information cannot be gained from the parents, Work & Income make every effort to ensure that the information given by the caregiver is correct.

If, after attempts to get full details from the parent and the caregiver, there is still not enough information to grant the benefit, Work & income may decline.

17. Parents cannot be found

If the child's parents cannot be found, make sure the caregiver is not helping to keep the parents uninvolved.

Work & Income make a decision on all available information.

If the parents cannot be located, decide whether an application for Orphans Benefit is more appropriate

18. Qualifications

To receive an Orphans Benefit or an Unsupported Childs Benefit, the client must be the principal caregiver of the child and:

- be aged 18 years or older **and**
- likely to have the child for at least one year **and**
- be a New Zealand citizen or [permanent resident](#) (i.e. not be in New Zealand unlawfully, here on a temporary entry class visa or a temporary permit) **or**
- be deemed to hold a residence class visa in New Zealand under the Immigration Act 2009 (e.g. Australian citizens or residents) **and**
- generally be ordinarily resident in New Zealand

To receive Unsupported Childs Benefit, the client must not be the child's natural parent, adoptive parent or step-parent and there is no natural parent, adoptive parent or step-parent able to care for the child because of a breakdown in the child's family.

For Orphans Benefit the client must not be the child's natural or adoptive parent. The child's parents must either be deceased, cannot be found or they suffer from a serious long-term illness or incapacity, which makes them unable to care for their child.

Note when a child has been legally adopted the birth parents are no longer considered the natural parents of that child.

Orphan's and Unsupported Child's Benefits

A guide for caregivers who are raising someone else's child (WINZ Brochure)

If you are raising someone else's child, we may be able to help in a small way by meeting some of the costs involved in their upbringing.

The **Orphan's Benefit** can help support the child when their parents have died or can't be found, or when they can't look after their child because they have a long-term illness or incapacity.

The **Unsupported Child's Benefit** can help support the child when their parents can't support them because of a family breakdown. We can grant you financial assistance from the date you first contact us, if you complete your application within 20 working days of that date.

Inland Revenue Department:

You may be eligible for **in-work tax credit**, which can be paid for children for whom you receive the Unsupported Child's Benefit or the Orphan's Benefit, provided you work the required hours. Call Inland Revenue free on **0800 227 773** to see if you are eligible, or visit **www.ird.govt.nz**

We appreciate that this is a lot to take in, therefore we respectfully ask that you do keep this for future reference as things can change in peoples circumstances. We will add more to this in next newsletter and if your brain is spinning, so was ours in trying to put this together but we hope this may be of assistance to you. Thank you Tricia Corin (GRG Field Officer) for your valuable assistance.

We are hearing an alarming amount of our grandparent members who have breast cancer, please, please make sure you get your checkups. To those members of ours who are facing this or in recovery we sent our prayers and aroha. Also many having hip replacements and by-passes, take it easy folks.

Wisdom:

If you love something set it free. If it comes back, it will always be yours.

If it does not come back, it was never yours to begin with.

But if it just sits in your living room, messes up your stuff, eats your food, uses your telephone, takes your money and does not appear to realize that you HAD set it free...

Well, you either married it or gave birth to it.

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Member Support Manager: Di Vivian Email office@grg.org.nz

Free Phone 0800 GRANDS or 0800 472637 ext. 1 (not for use for Auckland callers) Landline users only.

Auckland callers (09) 480 6530

Postal Add: PO Box 34 892 Birkenhead. Auckland 0742

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please contact the Trust Office as this is where the total mail out membership is kept. Moved home or planning to? Be sure to let us know.



We are a Charitable Trust

Member Support Manager: Di & team (as a caregiver you are part of our team)

heoi ano, na. *E te Atua, aroha mai..... O God shower us with love. Ka kite*
Ka Whangaia ka tupu, ka puawai..... That which is nurtured, blossoms and grows

Together we will and do make a difference in a child's life.

Please feel free to send/email this report on to others whom you think may be interested.

Please pass this on to other grandparents/kin carers you know of.

GRG Trust Head Office hours are 9am – 2pm daily. (We raise grandchildren too)

Views expressed in this newsletter may not be the views of the GRG Trust.

We are a voluntary not-for-profit organisation.

All donations to the GRG Trust are tax deductible.

Abbreviations:

GRG – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust

BOT – Board of Trustees

CYF – Child Youth and Family Services

Co's – Co-ordinator/s

UCB – Unsupported Child Benefit

WINZ – Work and Income NZ now DWI – Department of Work and Income

BPS – Business Professional Services Limited. Our secretarial service.

Are your children under CYF?

Do you have trouble getting hold of your Social Worker? If this is the case then you can call 0508 CARER (0508 227 377) and they will then make sure you are spoken to by your Social Worker and if they are not available then someone else will talk to you

