

Comments on Family Court Proceedings Reform Bill: Proposed changes to the Child Support Act

Prepared by WAVES Trust, 15 January 2013

The [Family Court Proceedings Reform Bill](#) proposes changes to the Child Support Act (CSA) some of which are outside the scope that was signalled in the 2011 [Family Court Review Discussion Document](#). This paper provides a brief overview of WAVES Trust's concerns about some of these proposed changes contained in the Bill. Our concerns are based on our experience of the work done by the family violence sector with victims, perpetrators, and their children and consultation meetings with various family violence sector stakeholders and professionals working within the Family Law sector.

For more detail see the word document titled 'Child Support Act changes' accompanying this paper. That document includes all the changes and the original clauses with our comments and suggestions that we will use for our submission; you are welcome to make use of these for your own submissions.

Changes outside the scope of the original Review

The Bill proposes similar changes to those already discussed in our comments on changes to Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act that were not discussed in the Family Court Review, specifically changes to Section 226 which:

- Changes legal counsel for the child or to assist the court from barristers or solicitors to lawyers.
- Allows the court to appoint these professionals only if satisfied it is necessary or desirable.
- Removes these professionals' right to call or cross-examine witnesses.

Of particular interest to the Family Violence Sector

The proposed change to Section 226 of the CSA raises issues of particular interest to the family violence sector. We will discuss these changes in our consultation meetings on January 22nd and 31st. Contact Jo Richdale to RSVP: jo@waves.org.nz.