Fact Sheet

The welfare system has incrementally evolved since its establishment in 1938. We have reached a critical juncture and it is now time to evaluate whether our social welfare system remains fit for purpose in contemporary New Zealand.

An 11 member Welfare Expert Advisory Group has been established to provide advice to the Government on options that could best give effect to its vision for the future direction of the social welfare system.

The Welfare Expert Advisory Group will provide advice to Ministers by 28 February 2019 on the following:

* amendments to the legislative purpose and principles of the Social Security Act that give effect to the vision and direction of the Government
* how any amendments to the purpose and principles in the Act could be implemented system-wide
* advice on other changes needed to ensure the system achieves the Government’s vision for the Welfare System
* changes to obligations and associated sanctions applied to beneficiaries to ensure alignment with the Government’s vision
* high level recommendations for improvements to Working for Families
* recommendations for areas where the interface between the welfare system and other systems need to be improved either because they are not functioning well or in light of the Group’s work on giving effect to the future vision for the welfare system – for instance:
  + ACC, education and training, housing, health and justice

The Welfare Expert Advisory Group will be chaired by Professor Cynthia (Cindy) Kiro who is a New Zealand public health academic. She is a former Children's Commissioner and former head of the School of Public Health at Massey University and currently head of Te Kura Maori at Victoria University of Wellington.

The members of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group bring a range of skills and expertise – including lived experience of the Welfare system, and in the areas of employment, economics, and research and analysis. These competencies are critical to this important work. The group also provides diverse perspectives, including representation of Māori, Pacific People, and disabled people.

The following people have been appointed as members of the group:

* Professor Innes Asher
* Kay Brereton
* Dr Huhana Hickey
* Trevor McGlinchey
* Professor Tracey McIntosh
* Dr Ganesh Nana
* Phil O’Reilly
* Robert Reid
* Latayvia Tualasea Tautai
* Charles Waldegrave