

We are New Zealand's Social Wellbeing Agency

We support the sector's capability to utilise social sector insights by creating tools and practices that stimulate social sector innovation.

We are a small government agency that works across the social system. We take a broad view, looking at issues that New Zealanders face which do not fit neatly into the work of a single agency. We are specialised, nimble and innovative. This allows us to get actionable insights to decision makers, and ensure that real people – whānau and communities – are involved in and benefit from the work we do.

What we're working for

Ultimately, we want our work to achieve sustainable improvements in the wellbeing of New Zealanders.



What we do

We use a broad and inclusive set of wellbeing measures that tell us whether people are leading full, meaningful lives. We create tools and practices to target gaps in the social sector's knowledge. We partner with the social sector, combining science, data and lived experience to draw insights that are enriched by whānau voices.

A social wellbeing approach

Improving social wellbeing enables people, whānau and communities to live the lives they aspire to, including both material conditions and quality of life. A social wellbeing approach is centred on people, with an emphasis on broad measures of wellbeing.

Our approach to improving social wellbeing is based on six principles.

1. We take a strengths based approach that focuses on people not just as individuals, but as members of broader family, whānau, iwi, communities, and regions.
2. We use a broad and inclusive set of measures of wellbeing.
3. We provide a range of support services for all New Zealanders.
4. We are clear about the outcomes we are seeking to achieve.
5. We use a wide range of data ranging from administrative data, lived experiences, and survey data.
6. We focus on how to make the best choices among possible interventions.

Learn what a social wellbeing approach looks like in practice. Read our case study [Towards better social sector decision making and practice: a social wellbeing approach \[PDF, 2.2 MB\]](#).

Who we work with

We collaborate with a range of government decision makers and non-government people — bringing the whole of New Zealand’s social system into view to enable social innovation that really works. We’re grateful to our foundation group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who’ve worked closely with us since our establishment and continue to do so: [Family Help Trust](#) , [Methodist Mission Southern](#) , [Presbyterian Support Northern](#) , [Te Tihi](#) , [The Southern Initiative](#) and [The Wise Group](#) .

We report to the Minister for Social Development – [Hon Carmel Sepuloni](#) – who agrees the Agency's work programme in consultation with the Social Wellbeing Board of social sector chief executives.

Our values



TĀNGATA

We're about people

People will do better, sooner and for longer, when the social system works in partnership, acting on better evidence to develop and deliver services.



MANAWA MĀUI

We're a catalyst for change

We challenge the status quo constructively and seek better ways of doing things. We help create change to improve lives through different approaches.



TAUNAKITANGA

We influence through evidence

We use evidence to influence positive change for New Zealanders.



PUARETANGA

We're transparent by nature

We will share what we're doing, how we're doing it, and what we learn.

Our history

Formerly the Social Investment Agency, we became the Social Wellbeing Agency on 19 March 2020. Read the [Minister's press release](#) .

We are a Departmental Agency hosted within the State Services Commission.