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Birthright Canterbury
Trust

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FAMILIES LED BY ONE PERSON IN SELWYN DISTRICT – INITIAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

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Selwyn District is the fastest growing district in New Zealand for young families

Population

59,300

Families led by one person

3,523

(7.9%)

Families on Sole Parent Support

228

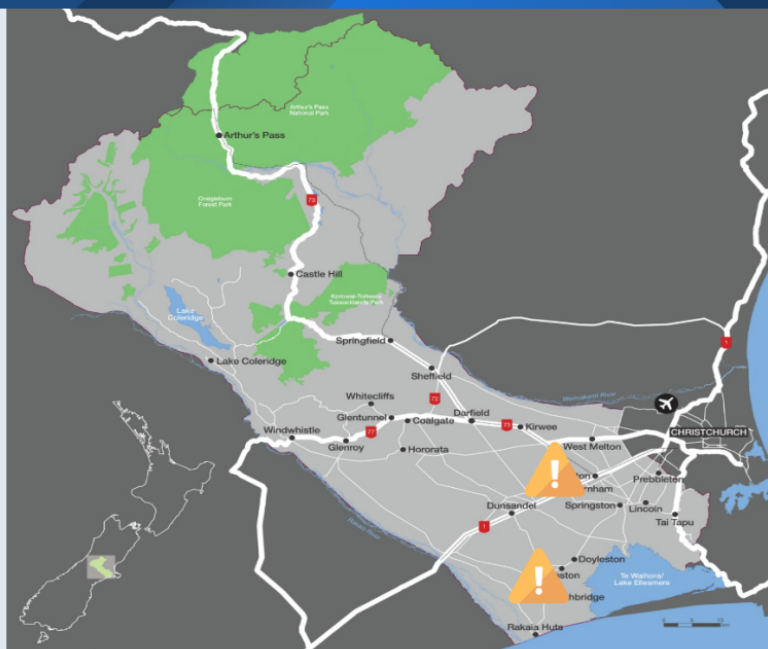
People under 15 years old

12,004

(22.3% compared to 20.4% for NZ)

Access Deprivation

65%



At first glance, Selwyn District appears affluent but there are two distinctive pockets of need



Pocket #1

Maori and Pacific families across Rolleston-Burnham-Dunsandel that are connected with Burnham Military camp and shift work companies (e.g. South Pacific Meats and Synlait Milk).

176 Maori and Pasifika preschoolers



Pocket #2

Families based in Leeston and Southbridge that were displaced by the earthquake and/or looking for cheap housing.

162 preschoolers



Isolation

There is a need for parenting support and programs in Selwyn. Especially for full-time working caregivers that are only available during evenings and weekends.

Shift workers face specific challenges and needs. Alternatively, creative income opportunities are needed for families led by one person in order to allow time during the day to connect with their communities, services and existing networks of support.



Stigma

Families going through the process of separation because of domestic violence are particularly vulnerable.

There is a stigma about sole parenting and divorce, particularly in the Pacific Island populations which is important to take into consideration when co-designing support for families that may not want to openly identify themselves as led by one person. There is also stigma around asking for help or being seen to have a problem.



Lack of Services

There is a lack of services based in Selwyn District, especially for mental health. For those families with children under five, only the families in the high need end receive support, leaving majority of families waiting 6-9 months or going privately incurring hundreds and even thousands of dollars in cost for services.



Oranga Tamariki Children's Team does not reach out to Selwyn District (old CYF model applies).

"At Burnham Military camp, the house is attached to the soldier, therefore if separation happens, the family eventually needs to vacate the house.

Families working in shift work companies are dependent on both husband and wife working and having different shifts to drop and pick up children from school. Families dependent on shift work are particularly vulnerable, meaning that caregivers work 12 hour shifts and spend very limited quality time with their children"



"These families are eager to continue at Playcentre. However, they feel pressured to go back to full-time work by Work and Income. Traditional working hours restrict caregivers from networks of community support, health and social services."



"There is a group of isolated rural young mums in Leeston and Southbridge with no driving license or access to a vehicle."



Organisations struggle to engage effectively with families. Families do not like to be seen to have a problem.

Demographics

Selwyn District is the fastest growing district in New Zealand for young families.

This population growth is mainly due to regional migration from Christchurch and Auckland¹. This growth in population has been mainly from families with children under five years old¹. From 2014 to 2017, there were a total of 1,284 under-fives that moved to Selwyn with their families from elsewhere in New Zealand¹.

Total Population	59,300¹
Population growth	6% per year¹
Children under five years old	3,820¹ (12.3% Maori)²
People under 15 years old	12,004 (22.3% of Total Population)²

There is a strong correlation between child poverty and family structure.

51% of children in poverty live in families led by one person⁴. Families led by one person are a very diverse group with different personal, financial and social resources to overcome disadvantage. Sole parents who are younger, have young children, belong to a Māori or Pacific family, are female, or have more than three children, are more likely to experience multiple disadvantage⁵.

Families led by one person in Selwyn District	3,523 (7.9%)²
Families on sole parent support in Selwyn District	228³
Families led by one person in Rolleston-Burnham-Dunsandel	895¹
Families led by one person in Leeston and Southbridge	454¹

Selwyn District has a high Access and Housing Deprivation

At first glance, Selwyn District appears affluent with highest deprivation index of only 4. However the New Zealand Index for Multiple

Deprivation (IMD) shows that the district is isolated and lacks access to services and programs that it needs. Moreover, it shows that Selwyn district has data zones amongst the 20% most deprived in New Zealand for the Housing Domain⁷. In overall, single parents have the lowest home ownership rates in New Zealand⁴.

Access Deprivation, fifth quintile⁶	65%⁷
Housing Deprivation, fifth quintile⁶	5%⁷
Burnham Military Camp Deprivation Index⁸	4
Leeston Deprivation Index⁸	4

¹ IDI data June 2017 – Data presented at Migration to Selwyn workshop, Selwyn District Council

² Census Data 2013

³ MSD Data March 2019

⁴ Mitchell, 2016

⁵ Krassoi Peach and Cording, 2018

⁶ The New Zealand Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measures deprivation at the neighbourhood level using custom data zones. The data zones are then split into quintiles, where fifth quintile represents the most deprived 20%.

⁷ Chiang and Exeter, 2019

⁸ The University of Otago's New Zealand 2013 index of deprivation is a measure of social economic deprivation, 10 represents areas most deprived

There are two distinctive pockets of need in Selwyn District

One pocket is Maori and Pasifika families across Rolleston-Burnham-Dunsandel corridor that are connected with Burnham Military camp and shift work companies (e.g. South Pacific Meats and Synlait Milk). There is an emerging Fijian community in the area. The other pocket is isolated families based in Leeston and Southbridge that were displaced by the earthquake and/or looking for cheap housing.

Families led by one person in Rolleston-Burnham-Dunsandel	895⁹
Maori and Pasifika pre-schoolers in Rolleston-Burnham-Dunsandel	176⁹
Total pre-schoolers in Rolleston-Burnham-Dunsandel	1,117⁹
Families led by one person in Leeston and Southbridge	454¹
Total pre-schoolers in Leeston and Southbridge	162⁹

Isolation

There is a need for parenting support and programs in Selwyn. Especially for full-time working caregivers who are only available during evenings and weekends. Also, some rural families struggle to get appropriate support to deal with behavioural issues with their children.

"...one of the most critical needs in the District is the support of parents and caregivers struggling in their role..."

"There is a group of isolated rural young mums in Leeston and Southbridge with no driving license or access to a vehicle during working hours. Most parenting programs engage the 30-40 year old age group, there is nothing tailored for teenage mothers or dads."

Playcentre has a strong presence in the rural communities of Selwyn District (Rolleston, Lincoln, Tai Tapu, West Melton, Prebbleton, Dunsandel, Hororata, Darfield, Southbridge, and Leeston). Their insights about families led by one person are that:

"...these families are eager to continue at Playcentre. However, these families feel pressured to go back to full-time work by Work and Income. Traditional working hours restrict caregivers from networks of community support, health and social services."

There are very limited part-time/flexi-time job opportunities in the District. Playcentre is one of the few organisations that offer a career pathway and job opportunities that suit the needs of parents with young children. However, paid opportunities are very limited and this seems to be better suited for families that received various sources of income. Educarents is another Selwyn-based charity company that provides families with home-based childcare options and assistance in accessing the community support networks and social services available to them.

For families that their structure changes because of bereavement, domestic violence or divorce, they usually have to move away from the District because of limited affordable housing and lack of

⁹ Ministry of Education (MoE) ECE Directory Data 2018

support for after-school care in this area. Because of the isolation, keeping shift work at South Pacific Meats or Synlait Milk becomes almost impossible if family structure changes.

“At Burnham Military camp the house is attached to the soldier, therefore if separation happens, the family has eventually to vacate the house. Families working in shift work companies are dependent on both husband and wife working and having different shifts to drop and pick up children from school. Families dependent on shift work are particularly vulnerable, meaning that caregivers work 12 hour shifts and spend very limited quality time with their children.”

“There is overcrowding of Pacific households, families are not able to afford after school care and rely on each other to look after their children. It seems common for older siblings to miss school to look after sick children rather than parents who have limited sick leave. “

Stigma and Domestic Violence

According to key stakeholders, there is a high incidence of domestic violence in Selwyn. To address this need a Family Harm subgroup from the Wellbeing Forum has recently been formed. This group is chaired by the Canterbury Rural PHO navigator despite lack of funding allocated for Selwyn District. This network just started and they are in the process of setting their strategic direction.

Anecdotal accounts identify that families in the process of changing structure because of domestic violence and imprisonment are particularly vulnerable. For instance, one Maori family shared that it took five years to legally separate from her partner. So families in the process of separation are in dire need of support. Most key support services are outside Selwyn District. A particular gap is supporting separating parents to keep in touch with their children, as this may require supervised visits. Local Police is very interested in co-design of services around custody. For instance, there is a woman that got transferred to Auckland prison but her 15 year old son still lives in Selwyn. Pacific Island families are very vulnerable because of the stigma of divorce in their tight-net religious communities as well as other factors such as their visa status, language barriers, dependency on their partner's income, and lack of traditional family networks.

“There is no funding available to keep whanau together. For example, relationship counselling. Separating Tamariki from their whanau creates Tamariki without identity. Oranga Tamariki and the court systems, separate whanau, which contributes to the intergenerational cycle of abuse and institutional racism.”

“There is a need for transitional house providing a wrap-around services focusing on the whanau in the Centre. Hands on whanau support workers supporting whanau who want to stay together. There is funding but mainly to supervise and not practicable support.”

There is a stigma about sole parenting and divorce, particularly in the Pacific Island populations which is important to take into consideration when co-designing support for families that may not want to openly identify themselves as led by one person.

“In Pacific culture there is a strong stigma attached to solo parenting. This is compounded with the fact that Pasifika communities are small and gossiping is common (exacerbated by social media). So domestic violence is more often tolerated and goes unreported. Some Pacific families in fact are led by one person even when still married, and subject of abuse. There is an emerging Fijian community in Canterbury because immigration policies have changed, making it easier for them to move to New Zealand. Many government agencies and NGOs are trying to learn how to engage with this specific population which is not as well established as the Tongan and Samoan communities. Freezing works tend to provide working visas to their employees. Pasifika churches are best suited to support with the engagement, specifically the different Christian denominations in the ethnic Pasifika communities.”

There is also stigma around asking for help or being seen to have a problem. Several services outside Selwyn struggle to engage with families. Learning how to engage effectively with families led by one person in Selwyn District will be an important theme to explore further.

Lack of Access to Services

Main agencies and social services are not based in Selwyn despite being the fastest growing district in New Zealand, which means that families need to travel to Christchurch. The further away from the city and the lower socioeconomic status, the less accessible these services are. Services such as Women’s Refuge and Teen Parents Units are based on the East of Christchurch. Whanau Ora Navigators and services for Maori and Pasifika are also based in Christchurch with very limited reach to Selwyn District. Rural Canterbury PHO has a practice support navigator in Selwyn, however funding by MSD has ended. Presbyterian support and Christchurch Methodist Mission are also based in Christchurch. Moreover, Oranga Tamariki children’s team does not offer their services in Selwyn District and the roll out has been postponed indefinitely. Still the old CYF system applies for Selwyn.

There is a significant gap in mental health support. For those families with children under five, only the families in the high need end receive support, leaving majority of families waiting 6-9 months or going privately incurring hundreds and even thousands of dollars in cost for services. An estimated 43% of sole parents meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental disorder, being anxiety the most common disorder¹⁰.

“...there are only two options for families in Selwyn. To go public and go through waiting lists of 6-9 months or opt for private services with a cost of approximately \$800 only in assessments plus time and costs incurred in travelling to Christchurch.”

Mana Ake is a service that provides support for children aged five to 12 years old across Canterbury. Mana Ake kaimahi work with schools to support teachers, families and whānau when children are experiencing ongoing issues that impact their wellbeing such as anxiety, social isolation, parental

¹⁰ MSD study 2010

separation, grief and loss and managing emotions. Man Ake only provides short term intervention (usually around three months). In Selwyn, they do support several families led by one person, particularly grandparents looking after their grandchildren. Anxiety seems to be a common reason for requesting support. They have also supported children experiencing grief and loss. The main gap that they have identified is that there is very limited access to support services for children and families in Selwyn. Some organisations from Christchurch support families in Selwyn, including Presbyterian Support and Stand Children's Services. Mana Ake provides additional capacity to the Selwyn region, focusing on children in primary schools (years 1-8). They work with schools to manage capacity so that they can maintain a flexible and responsive approach.

"Referral for mental health in the rural communities rests within the medical centres and family GP. Youth in the rural settings are less likely to share intimate information with the GP that looks after their whole family. Many organisations do not have the funding to cover Selwyn, and therefore there is a lack of presence of support services in the district. Furthermore, Family Planning services are based in the city making it hard to access for rural youth in Selwyn."

Besides Early Start Project, there are no other social workers in Selwyn that visit vulnerable families, including families led by one person, and connect them with the help and services available in the community. This is only available for vulnerable infants under 9 months of age. They currently have 22 families active in Selwyn District.

Engagement

Playcentre offers Babies CanPlay as a program for first parents of children aged 0-2 yrs old. This program is offered in Lincoln, Rolleston and very recently in Leeston. Although Playcentre is aware of the need to support families in Leeston, the uptake by families is very low. Currently they have four families and if numbers do not grow they will be obliged to stop offering the program in Leeston. Uptake of parenting programs seems to be an issue. Besides the example of the Babies Can Play program in Leeston, another initiative for fathers and their sons only managed to have an uptake of two Selwyn Families.

Selwyn District Council approached Birthright to be part of the Rolleston Community House. Birthright Canterbury Trust offered a Drop-in service for 6 months¹¹ in Selwyn and only two families engaged. Rolleston Community House is a fairly new space that looks like a residential home with no public signage. The general community is not aware of the existence of this hub. After the trial finished, without further promotion, five more families have approached Birthright from Rolleston, Lincoln and Springston. Two of those seven families have children under five years old.

Learning how to engage in Selwyn District will be an important theme to explore further if the co-design process goes ahead. Some insights from conversations are that there is stigma in asking for help, also that sole-parenting is not how families want to be defined. Family structure is very fluid and families preferred to engage in programs that are positively framed rather than implying that they have a problem. Identifying gatekeepers in the community and winning their support also impacts in the level of engagement of families.

¹¹ June-December 2018

Birthright Opportunities for Collaboration and Partnership

These are the initial opportunities for collaboration:

- Selwyn District Council: Selwyn District Council is interested in the outcomes of the initial research and co-design process. The Council also offers community funding that could support initiatives after the prototyping phase. The Council also has facilities that could be provided at subsidised costs. Also, the Council has already connected this research with the following spaces that they support – the Selwyn Wellbeing Forum, the Family Harm subgroup and the Selwyn Youth Network.
- Selwyn Parenting Network: The network is interested in the outcomes of the research and co-design and willing to partner with Birthright.
- Playcentre: Open for the use of their venues in the co-design process and partner to prototype lines of action that align with their values.
- Educarents: Interested in partnering in implementing prototypes around minimisation of family harm in Selwyn.
- Te Whare Hauora: Interested in extending their presence in Selwyn and partnering around minimisation of family harm in Selwyn.
- Ākina Foundation: Interested in social enterprise capacity building opportunities depending on availability of funding.
- Etu Pasifika: Whanau Ora services are very interested in exploring ways to better reach Pasifika families in Selwyn district (no clients from Selwyn at the moment).

Other potential partnerships that could be further explored are the Community Care NGOs across Selwyn, Salvation Army, Two Rivers Trust, Burnham Military Camp Community Services, Pegasus Health PHO¹², South Pacific Meats, Synlait Milk, Canterbury Pasifika Churches Network.

¹² Although Canterbury Rural PHO has a strong presence in Selwyn, all 7 medical practices belong to Pegasus Health PHO

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Key Informants

The following stakeholders provided information for this initial needs analysis:

- Anna Nurse, Plunket Community Support Coordinator
- Anna Steel, Centre Support Person, Upper South Island Playcentre Hub
- Antonio Filimoehala, Whanau Ora Manager, Etu Pasifika
- Brenna Russell, Practice Support Coordinator, Canterbury Rural PHO
- Bruce Morton, General Manager, Sport Canterbury
- Carol Frost, Kai Tautoko Hau Pura -Team Leader, Te Whare Hauora
- Chris Martin, Lead Consultant, 4YP Consulting
- Dalene Mactier, Manager, Upper South Island Playcentre Hub
- Denise Kidd, Community Relations Manager, Selwyn District Council
- Dianne Oakley, Team Leader Tamariki Ora, Te Puawaitanga ki Ōtautahi Trust
- Fiona Wells, Team Leader, Mana Ake
- Jill Borland, Manager, Ākina Foundation
- Kate Webb, Coordinator, Selwyn Parenting Network
- Kathryn Hodgkinson, Defence Community Facilitator, Burnham Military Camp
- Keith Allen, Service Manager, Department of Corrections
- Losana Korovulavula, Pasifika Health Promoter, Tangata Atumotu Trust
- Lynette Park, Child Advocate, Educarents
- Michael Heywood, Community and Economic Advisor, Selwyn District Council
- Miranda Harris – Early Start Social Worker
- Rachel Fearn, Nursery Team Leader, Active Explorers Leeston ECE
- Rhodora Sagles, Manager, Birthright Canterbury Trust
- Ross Haggart, Oranga Tamariki
- Sandra Keenan, Team Leader, Mana Ake (former Principal of Burnham Primary School)
- Sarah Mckinnon, Clinical Supervisor, Early Start

Attended the following spaces to gain further insights:

- Migration to Selwyn Workshop, 19th June 2019
- Selwyn Wellbeing Forum, 17th May 2019
- Selwyn Family Harm Focus Group, 5th July 2019
- Selwyn Social Housing Focus Group, 1st July 2019
- Selwyn Youth Network, 17th May 2019
- Pasifika Women's Leadership Fono, 17th May 2019