

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# **Sole father's experiences of accessing social services.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for  
the Degree  
of  
Master of Social Work

At



**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
**TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA**

**Manawatū**

**Jason Edward Rushton**

February 2017

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. This will be achieved by addressing the experiences of men who undertook the role of sole fathers to support their family with the aid of statutory and non-government agencies. The research took a qualitative approach and utilised in-depth semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the experiences of the participants. Eight sole fathers were interviewed, four of the participants identified themselves as straight; while the remaining four participants were divided into two subsets from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexed and Queer/Questioning (GLBTIQ) community namely, three being gay and one identified as bisexual.

The study's findings were congruent with existing literature on the experiences of fathers who accessed social services in the hope of supporting their family. The findings included factors contributing to the discourse fathers felt in accessing supports and their rationale for choosing not to engage with further supports. Furthermore, there were four key findings namely, (1). Men who assume gender reversal roles like that of sole parent, who experience discrimination and minimisation based on gender and sexual identity of their basic human rights as set out in legislation, religion and societies disposition towards men taking up this role. (2). There is still much work to be done to create truly inclusive support services, and an authentically respectful social consensus on issues like marriage equality and non-traditional family types. (3). How social workers can apply this knowledge when supporting and advocating for fathers who are experiencing institutional barriers to accessing social services. (4). The findings provided knowledge around the challenges sole fathers faced in Aotearoa New Zealand when accessing supports in the hope to support and care for their families. These include recommendations to establish a Ministry for Men that oversee men's health, and the required changes to ensure that sole fathers can access social service supports. Therefore, it is the hope that this

research supports social workers when they apply this knowledge in supporting and advocating for fathers who are experiencing institutional barriers to accessing social services.

**Only A Dad by Edgar Albert Guest**

Only a dad, with a tired face,  
coming home from the daily race,  
bringing little of gold or fame,  
to show how well he has played the game,  
but glad in his heart that his own rejoice,  
to see him come, and to hear his voice.

Only a dad, with a brood of four,  
one of ten million men or more,  
plodding along in the daily strife,  
bearing the whips and the scorns of life,  
with never a whimper of pain or hate,  
for the sake of those who at home await.

Only a dad, neither rich nor proud,  
merely one of the surging crowd,  
toiling, striving from day to day,  
facing whatever may come his way,  
silent, whenever the harsh condemn,  
and bearing it all for the love of them.

Only a dad, but he gives his all,  
to smooth the way for his children small,  
doing, with courage stern and grim,  
the deeds that his father did for him,  
his is the line that for him I pen,  
only a dad, but the best of men.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my thanks, and express my sincere appreciation to the following persons for their invaluable support and unending encouragement:

My beautiful daughter Skye Imrie Rushton has been my source of inspiration, my courage, my willpower, and my strength to continue even when the going got tough. I stole time with her to pursue my personal growth and she showed me nothing but love and that there are different ways to parent. I will always cherish being her father.

My mum, Jacqueline Rushton, who gave me inspiration to challenge those who said I should do trade training as someone with Dyslexia would not be able to succeed at academic study.

My father, Brian Rushton who passed away on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2015, while I was working on my thesis. My father and I rarely saw eye to eye but we learnt to respect each other and accept our differences. These differences helped me discover alternative approaches to parenting and life. Before his passing, he acknowledged my achievements and informed me how proud he was of me. Rest in peace dad, I love you.

My ex-wife, Hilda Jeanne Helene Joubert; without you we would not have created a very special person in our lives. Thank you for sharing so many special years together and for helping me achieve a deeper understanding of maintaining and creating my own family.

My supervisors Dr Michael Dale and Dr Martin Sullivan who offered me invaluable direction and insight which I constantly challenged, as they challenged my identity, values and beliefs in completing this study. Thanks for your knowledge and support. Your involvement has helped steel my resolve to succeed and is truly appreciated.

## **Dedication**

This study is dedicated to all the fathers in Aotearoa New Zealand who have stepped forward to assume the role of custodial fathers and thereby to support their child(ren), and make a positive impact on their lives. You are empowered with knowledge to make informed decisions in your lives and those family and friends around you!

# Table of Contents

Abstract .....	i
Poem – Only a Dad .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Dedication .....	v
<b>Chapter One:</b> Introduction .....	1
Structure of the Thesis .....	9
<b>Chapter Two:</b> Literature Review .....	11
<b>Chapter Three:</b> Legislation .....	34
<b>Chapter Four:</b> Methodology .....	53
<b>Chapter Five:</b> Results .....	65
<b>Chapter Six:</b> Discussion .....	97
<b>Chapter Seven:</b> Conclusion .....	113
Bibliography .....	128
<b>List of Appendixes</b>	
Appendix A: Screening Questionnaire .....	151
Appendix B: MUHEC Application Form .....	155
Appendix C: Information Sheet .....	170
Appendix D: Participants Consent Form .....	172
Appendix E: Interview Schedule .....	173
Appendix F: Authority of Release of Tape Transcript .....	175
Appendix G: Letter requesting access to participants .....	176
Appendix H: Advertisement/Script .....	177
Appendix I: Data Collection Flowchart .....	178
Appendix J: Confirmation of Approval of Ethics Application .....	179
Appendix K: Glossary of Abbreviations and Māori Terms .....	180
<b>List of Tables</b>	
Table 1.1: Families with dependent children by Family type, 1976-2013. ....	7
Table 5.1: Participants Information .....	66
Table 5.2: Supports and Ratings of agencies by participants .....	77



# Chapter One

## Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. The fundamental issues of addressing inequalities within societies should be advocated by social workers irrespective of gender and life-style. Social workers and services providers may find themselves working with men of all ages; as such it would be beneficial for social workers and individuals working in the social services to understand the struggles and discriminations many men endure and face when accessing supports for their families in Aotearoa New Zealand. This study seeks to understand factors that might influence the social construction of parenting for sole fathers; seeking to obtain the views and experiences of sole fathers in relation to accessing statutory and non-government social services in support of their families.

As social workers, we are educated to understand the contextual world we live in. It is crucial for social workers and the wider community to be knowledgeable about factors which influence men becoming sole parents and the support systems available to them by statutory and non-government agencies. Various factors including social, religious, cultural, emotional, educational and economic issues contribute towards constructing how custodial fathers interpret their rights within Aotearoa New Zealand. There is minimal national or international research at present to identify custodial father's rights within Aotearoa New Zealand and the discrepancies that they face as sole or custodial fathers. Therefore, this study identifies literature and research about men, both gay (Māori takatāpui<sup>1</sup>) and straight, and societies' understandings of what is perceived as being 'normal' and 'not normal' when it comes to sole fathers accessing social services to support their families. These societal perceptions are

---

<sup>1</sup> Māori men and women use the word takatāpui to describe themselves as gay or lesbian. The word takatāpui plays an important part as it identifies Māori cultural aspects and identity within their contemporary and traditional connections with their community (TE ARA, 2016).

underpinned by dominant Christian values and beliefs which inform the legislation pertaining to marriage and family law (Davies, n.d.; Locke, 2005). In turn, this legislation creates difficulties for sole fathers when parenting irrespective of sexuality, despite amendments in favour of social change to include gay and lesbian's in unions and marriages (Hide, 2012; The Department of Internal Affairs, 2015). There are pockets within our society struggling with the notion of men becoming custodial fathers partly because the media frequently portrays men as violent towards their spouses and children (Nelson Mail, 2007; MacLennan, 2016), and partly because of the gendered belief that women are natural carers with a maternal instinct to care for their children and that it is unnatural for males to be sole parents (Chapman, 2000). In addition, the discussions around media's portrayal of men and the acts of paedophilia which restrict men from taking on the role as sole fathers (Witchel, 2011). Furthermore, the traditional, highly gendered roles of men as protectors and providers and women as the carers and nurturers act powerfully against those men who chose to reverse gender roles and care for their children at home.

### **Research Aim**

This research aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies in the hope to support themselves and their child(ren).

The research question is:

“What are sole father's experiences when accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand?”

There are four auxiliary questions:

1. What does the structure of the family look like?
2. What interactions do fathers have with social services?
3. What social stigma do participants experience?
4. Is social work ready to advocate for sole fathers?

## **Researcher's interest in the topic**

The research topic was inspired by personal experiences due to my separation and divorce from my wife. This was followed by the legal application for custody over my child. A few years later I transitioned my sexuality to gay, and during this process of 'coming out' I linked with professional social services for support and guidance. I was further inspired by the stories of men with whom I worked as a social worker, who reported that their voices were not considered by society when accessing supports when trying to care for their child(ren). This prejudice was further evidenced when I supported fathers in gaining custody, day-to-day care or financial assistance when interacting with social services. This was due to the consensus views within our society about men and their gender identities resulting in social stigma which influenced their decisions to either proceed with supports or just struggle alone. As a researcher, I am aware that it is impossible for my background not to have any impacts on the study (Dane, 1990). As a postgraduate student, Registered Social Worker with the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), and a full member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Worker (ANZASW) and a member of Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), with personal interests in the data (Punch, 2006), I am aware of the possibility of researcher bias. Therefore, to minimise bias, the following vigorous steps were taken to identify and minimise potential biases:

Submitting a full ethics application to the Massey University Ethics Committee and identifying any potential biases around the study, which included the questions, answers, samples and reporting; Supervision sessions with academic supervisors and staff from Massey University; Supervision minutes and notes as a means of checks and balances in the form of an audit trail that was used to record all decisions made, and the reasons for these decisions (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).

## **Key terms and concepts**

The primary concepts used in this study include legislation, policy, attitudes, social norms and challenges, construction of fathers, fatherhood and fathering, social services, human rights, welfare, custodial fathers, reproductive health, safety and risk, heterosexual and homosexual reforms, and religion. The following concepts required further definition to provide clarity for the study:

*Welfare reform:* The Domestic Purpose Benefit (DPB) was changed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2013. It was broken down into two different categories, namely, Sole Parent Support and Jobseeker Support, which was offered, depending on the age of the child(ren) in care. Many of the research participants and literature referred to clients receiving the DPB during their time as caregivers, and therefore, these benefits will be referred to as such and not the current beneficiary titles when quoting literature and participants who used the Sole Parent and Job Seekers nomenclature, these terms will be used. Furthermore, Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) changed their name to Work and Income, and for continuity throughout the study the abbreviation WINZ will be used.

*Gay and Straight:* Literature uses the terms Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual and Transgender (GLBT) (Kirsch, 2000). Sometimes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Transgender (LGBT) are used interchangeably to identify the gay community (Kirsch, 2000). However, the new terminology for the homosexual community is now referred to as the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersexed and Queer (GLBTIQ). For clarity throughout this study the word 'gay' will no longer encompass both male and female homosexuals; 'Gay' will be used to identify male homosexuals and 'lesbian' will address female homosexuals (Gay and Lesbian Rights, n.d.). The term 'straight' will be used in identifying heterosexual males.

Father: In this thesis a father is defined as a male parent either biological or not, who is the provider, carer and nurturer for his child(ren) (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993).

Fathering: Marsiglio, Day and Lamb (2000) and Steinmetz (as cited in Palkovitz, 2002) note that fathering is an interwoven tapestry of paternal interactions between men and their children by performing the daily tasks of parenting.

Fatherhood: In this thesis fatherhood is defined as the relationship (kinship) between father and child (Williams, 2008).

Social services: Social services are welfare supports for individuals and families that are carried out under professional auspices by trained personnel. Social services in Aotearoa New Zealand are divided into two subdivisions, namely, statutory and non-government agencies (NGO). Statutory social services are often carried out by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), and include other government service providers namely, District Health Boards and the Department of Corrections. There are two prominent services arms, Child, Youth and Family (CYFs), who will have a name change in April 2017 to the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki (Kenny & Walters, 2016), which is mandated to offer care and protection to vulnerable children and young people and Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), who had a name change to Work and Income this year offers services such as, employment advice, income supports and superannuation services; student allowances and loans through Studylink; and, social housing assessments, education and food subsidies (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). NGO's are often funded by MSD and the private sector to provide a variety of services and humanitarian roles including advocacy, social service supports, such as food banks, counselling, advocacy services, social workers, community law, youth workers and religious congregations and groups and social justice to improve the lives of marginalised individuals in need of supports.

## **Background**

The role of sole fathers and their rights to become fathers has been portrayed in the media and films over the decade, namely, *The Descendants*, *Moneyball* and *We Bought a Zoo*, to name a few. These portrayals are due to societies shift and acceptance of men taking on the role of sole fathers (Ganahl, 2015). The changing roles of men and how they interact within our society is changing, and it is these experiences that will be explored.

## **Changing roles of families in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Statistics New Zealand (2014a) has indicated that the traditional expression of family is evolving and that men are becoming more involved in childrearing for various reasons including voluntary choice, changes in employment status, and changes in family composition from two parents to custodial or non-custodial parenting, and shared parenting arrangements. Much has been written about the importance of fathers in their children's lives (Birks & Callister, 1999; Chapman, 2000; Hendrickson, 2005). However, as with all social change, the acceptance of men, irrespective of sexuality are not fully supported by some social service agencies. For example, while welcoming increased involvement in their children's lives by fathers, services that work with families are unsure of how to make their services more attractive and accessible for fathers (Ashley, Featherstone, Roskill, Ryan & White, 2006 as cited in Davidson & Palmer, 2009). Ashley et al. (2006) suggests this is due to the lack of research identifying father's needs around service delivery. As society, has changed, so too has the number of sole fathers. Unfortunately, there are minimal qualitative studies and literature addressing the experiences of sole fathers (Perz, 2001; Pettitt, 2000; Tuazon-McCheyne, 2010). The literature available is often of a quantitative nature as captured by Statistics New Zealand. Table 1.1, shows the number of families with dependent children from 1967 to 2013 in Aotearoa New Zealand.

	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2013
<b>Two Parent</b>	398,772	380,886	363,489	339,681	346,086	339,159	370,809	469,287
<b>One Parent</b>	46,296	62,280	82,632	110,055	126,585	140,178	145,032	144,411
<b>Mother Only</b>	39,153	52,938	71,388	92,028	107,394	117,018	120,996	121,566
<b>Father Only</b>	7,143	9,342	11,244	18,024	19,191	23,163	24,036	22,845
<b>Total Families</b>	445,068	443,166	446,121	449,736	472,671	479,337	515,841	758,109

Table 1.1: Families with dependent children by family type, 1976-2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014a).

There was a steady increase of sole fathers until 2006, but the 2013 census recorded a decrease of 1191 sole fathers since the 2006 census. This shows that the proportion of families with dependent children headed by one parent fell slightly between 2001 and 2006. In 2010, Statistics New Zealand predicted that by 2031, one-parent families with dependent children will account for 34% of all families with dependent children; this number was derived by applying the mid-range family projection to the 2006 census results (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). Statistics New Zealand (2014) Census which took place in 2013 identified that there were 758,109 families with dependent children living in New Zealand, which consisted of 469,287 straight couples, 22,845 single fathers. In addition, there was 16,662 same sex couples and of those couples, 3,366 were male couples without children and 306 with children. This identified the small research sample of sole fathers available in order to capture their experiences when accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The 2006 Census identified 515,800 families with dependent children, aged less than 18 years and not in full-time employment living within Aotearoa New

Zealand households.<sup>2</sup> They made up 80% of the 641,500 families with children of any age. There is a difference in the age profile of male and female sole parents. Women are more likely than men to take responsibility for children born to relatively young parents who are not married or in stable de facto relationships, whereas, male sole parenthood most commonly results from the dissolution of marriages or partnerships (Statistics New Zealand, 2012).

Parents living with dependent children had an older age profile than their counterparts in the mid-1980s and conversely, sole fathers tend to be a little older than partnered fathers, with a median age of 42 years old in 2006, compared to 41 years old for fathers in two-parent families. The median age of parents with dependent children was the same for both female couples and male couples: 37 years old in 1996 and 2001, and 39 years old in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2011). The significance of this information is to compare Statistics New Zealand's findings to those of the participants and the results of this study.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduced the key objectives and the significance of the study into the experiences of sole fathers accessing social service in Aotearoa New Zealand, by identifying key concepts, researcher's interests and known statistics and literature around the changing roles of families from a two-parenting income household to a one parenting household. Below is the structure of the thesis, which will be followed by chapter two the literature review.

---

<sup>2</sup>It is important to note that the Census definition of child dependency has changed over time. From 1996 a dependent child was defined as a person in a family aged less than 18 years and is not in full-time employment. Prior to 1996 dependent child is a person in a family under 16 years of age or aged 16–18 years and still at school (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). These changes have direct impact on statistics and should be taken into consideration.



## **Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is structured into seven chapters.

### **Chapter Two**

#### **Literature Review: Gender reversal roles: Sole men accessing social service to take care of their children.**

Chapter Two discuss the current social service system and the tension around accessing supports. Furthermore, it explores the experiences of sole fathers, either out of choice or through separation, adoption, whānau agreement, Court orders, surrogacy or the death of a spouse. It also presents a constructive view of the tensions surrounding non-traditional fathering, particularly as they relate to gender reversals and society's disposition towards men.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Aotearoa New Zealand legislation.**

Chapter Three discusses the Aotearoa New Zealand legal system, and how it can support, hinder or restrict men who are, or who wish, to become sole fathers. Literature around the consensus view of human rights, and the rights to obtain statutory and non-government supports, either financial or legal, are discussed.

### **Chapter Four**

#### **Methodology**

This chapter details the interpretivist research methods used and explains why they were considered best suited to support the thesis topic. The interviews were semi-structured and took on an inductive approach, and the framework used to analyse and interpret the original accounts, by gathering the perspectives of the participants which was more explicit and strongly informed. The primary research tool used was the personal in-depth interviews.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Results**

This chapter presents the results of the research. The chapter starts with an introduction to the research participants, their family structure, age, demographics and reasons for becoming a sole father, and the impacts of doing so. The study then presents their experiences as fathers accessing social services.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. This chapter will discuss these findings with relevant literature linking the key findings. This chapter discusses the conclusions that can be drawn regarding the objectives and findings of this study.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Conclusions**

Chapter 7 concludes the study by presenting a summary of the key findings, discussion of the implications of these findings, limitations and strengths of the thesis, and recommendations for practice and further research.

## **Chapter Two: Literature review**

### **Introduction**

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. The researcher conducted a review of empirical and theoretical literature sources on custodial fathers to identify what was known about the experiences they faced when accessing social services from statutory and non-government agencies when trying to support their families in Aotearoa New Zealand. This review revealed that there was a considerable amount of research outside of Aotearoa New Zealand but that it is restricted to male custodial parenting as it relates to their health and the implications for their child(ren). Further research identified the legal discourse fathers' face around custodial issues and the violence surrounding men against women and children in the family unit. The researcher found minimal Aotearoa New Zealand studies that identified what supports custodial fathers need when accessing social services (Breiding-Buss, 1999; Birk, 2000; Chapman, 2000). No studies into the impacts on sole fathers and their families from religion, legislation and society's disposition towards sole fathers when accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand were found.

The researcher identified some key research terms, for example, sole fathers, fathers and children, biological reproduction and legislation by consulting Brookers online database; the New Zealand legislative database on the history of Aotearoa New Zealand; journals and books; University library database such as, Academic OneFile and PsycINFO; Aotearoa New Zealand magazines, newspapers, and journals; international studies and magazine articles; and Social Work Review. These materials were reviewed, analysed and categorised to identify themes that addressed the research question. The New Zealand government policies and legislation that impacted men in their role as father, and which addressed gender and sexuality differences that caused discrimination, were also consulted. The next section introduces statutory social services in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **Social services in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) administrates many social services, and one of these services, WINZ underwent an internal policy change in 2013 in the hope of removing stigma associated with the different types of supports and benefits offered to those individuals that were struggling to meet their daily needs just to survive. The different types of Domestic Purpose Benefit were replaced with Jobseekers and Sole Parent supports with the aim of encouraging beneficiaries from sickness, invalids, aged and the unemployed to look for work to reduce the finance obligation by the government for welfare support payments.

Currently, solo parent beneficiaries are receiving \$300.98 per week after tax with \$120 accommodation supplement which is an average of \$420.98 per week (Work and Income New Zealand, 2016a). However, considering the findings from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment that the average rents in Christchurch were \$418 per week, with lower quartile rents at \$285 per week. Whereas, in Auckland rents were even higher (Robinson, 2015), leaving beneficiaries with minimal to no income for foods, electric and ongoing living expenses.

It is understandable that the financial supports received from WINZ are the bare necessities just to pay for rent. Then there are those beneficiaries and lower income earners that cannot afford the basic needs to put a roof over their heads. This was recently highlighted in the local news relating to accommodation shortages which led to families living in their cars (Ashton, 2016; Ford, 2016; MacLennan, 2016). Both beneficiaries and lower income earners are struggling to meet the basic needs of food and shelter. What is further concerning being that this type of living has become an acceptable social norm (Ashton, 2016; Ford, 2016; MacLennan, 2016). Maslow's hierarchy of needs focuses on the basic needs of individuals are being met for survival, safety and security. If basic needs, for example, shelter and food is not being met, lack of motivation to pursue happiness and healthy relationships with others will occur, along with a feeling of not belonging (Burton, Westen, & Kowalski, 2012).

Therefore, there are beneficiaries that choose to cheat the system, for example, by not reporting additional earning, as they cannot see any other way to support themselves and their families. Which has led to WINZ dedicating webpage just on how to report these beneficiaries that are believed to be cheating the system (Work and Income New Zealand, 2016b) and monitoring beneficiaries' social media pages (Garcia, 2016). Therefore, it is understandable that these changes to the beneficiary system did not just happen without any complications. Research by MacLennan (2016) identified that beneficiaries felt that they were forced into looking for work, even if they were not medically or physically fit to do so. Chapter 3 discusses the Social Security Act 1964 with regards to beneficiary supports system which is viewed as a hands-up and not a hands-out approach to social supports. Research has identified that men would prefer not to engage with statutory social service, due to the stigma associated with being on a benefit (Breiding-Buss, 2000), which reflects the strong influence of neo-liberalism within the current societal norms of how family structures are perceived. For instance, the roles of man and wife, child rearing responsibilities, and the acceptance of single fathers taking up these roles. Media seems to focus on the negative narrative portrayed by WINZ around beneficiaries' experiences accessing supports. Jones (2015) noted that WINZ has failed in enforcing this platform in getting people back into work. Furthermore, Jones (2015) stated that Minister Tolley makes no apologies for trailing different ways in getting beneficiaries back into the workplace. Beneficiaries' advocate Brereton stated that "the underwhelming results showed people pushed off benefits were motivated to find work. Unfortunately, the Ministry comes from a different direction - the only reason they haven't got a job is that they are not trying hard enough" (para. 16). Morton (as cited in Robinson, 2015) further reports that there was a decline in Canterbury of sole parents on the benefit, and associates this with the government's strong stance on reducing the number of beneficiaries. Research has shown that benefits are inadequate, which has left many beneficiaries in a state of poverty (MacLennan, 2016). Further, research on family violence and drug use has been linked to those living in lower social

economic environments and trying to survive on the breadline (Nelson Mail, 2007). MacLennan (2016), a lawyer and co-author for a Child Poverty Action Group, submitted a paper to the MSD stating that the livable standards need to be raised for beneficiaries to counteract the effects of child poverty, and that beneficiaries found the interaction with case managers and the application for a benefit through WINZ intimidating and exhausting. MacLennan (2016) further suggests that "these are people already living in stressful circumstances" (p. 27).

Morton (as cited in Robinson, 2015) the Canterbury Community Law lead researcher, identified that WINZ beneficiaries are often too scared to challenge their case managers. Morton's report was based on 21 interviews with current beneficiaries who identified themselves as having problems accessing social service entitlements. Of these 21 participants, some had been investigated for benefit fraud, challenged their case manager's decisions, or had requested a benefit review or used the appeal process. Further participants included case managers, members of the review committees, advocates and lawyers. A lawyer in the report stated:

Beneficiaries are uniformly scared stiff of the department (Work and Income). The department's got the axe above their head . . . they've got huge power over these people, power of the most basic rights, food, clothing and shelter [Morton as cited in Robinson, 2015].

Morton (as cited in Robinson, 2015) further reported that it is essential that beneficiaries can be guided to use legal help to challenge the MSD. Furthermore, it is important that social workers have the necessary knowledge around the legal system to support vulnerable people and their rights of entitlements.

After the fatal shooting that took place in 2015 at the WINZ office in Ashburton, it was reported by Bradbury (2016) that there was a string of copycat attacks and threats made around the country against WINZ offices. Bradbury's investigation found that it seemed that the perpetrators were mainly men, who just had had

enough of being humiliated by the current economic conditions, and felt helpless around a system that offered no escape from poverty (Bradbury, 2016). While not attempting to diminish the atrocity of the crime that Russell John Tully committed against case workers in Ashburton, it nonetheless appears that the focus is still primarily on how to protect the staff at WINZ (Ball, 2015). The author wishes to acknowledge that the Ashburton incident was a great tragedy and that the women staffs of WINZ were innocent victims of a needless tirade that was directed at the system. Literature on how to change the environment when working with clients or the type of employees needed as frontline workers when engaging with beneficiaries was limited. WorkSafeNZ (2015) reported that WINZ needs to install glass fronts or restriction metal cords, and change the layout of the offices, for example, the way bank tellers are protected by glass fronts. WINZ however, suggested that this would not be acceptable as they operate from a person-centered approach to working with beneficiaries (Davies, 2016). This is in total contrast to the report by Robinson (2015) that suggests that beneficiaries are scared to engage with WINZ case managers due to the power and control differential between them. However, at the time of this thesis, the recommendation for safe working conditions is still in process.

As with so much social change happening within MSD, namely the restructuring of CYFs around our most vulnerable, there is research that has a direct correlation between beneficiaries and child protection issues (Wynd, 2012). Therefore, would it not make more sense to employ social workers that have an underpinning of how to engage with our most vulnerable people? Social workers train for up to four years to have this knowledgebase when working with individuals. Leslie (2016) reports that social work mandatory registration is currently under review and will hopefully be implemented by 2017. Therefore, you would have thought that the MSD would be employing and encouraging social workers to apply and be recruited as frontline case managers at WINZ. Currently the MSD only advertises for social worker roles for CYFs (Ministry of Social Development, 2016d). However, this is not the case, and will form part of the discussion in Chapter 6, as it is the MSD role to offer supports and wellbeing

to the public, which includes sole fathers and how they perceive their interactions from the Ministry to whom they are accountable to (MSD, 2016b).

### **Men accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Philip Chapman was commissioned by the Nelson/Tasman District Council to conduct a study of fathers and the social restrictions they faced when requesting social service. The research did not identify a service but seemed to be directed at statutory agencies, as they referred to fathers applying for social benefits (Chapman 2000), for example, WINZ. The research asked fourteen groups of men and women "What is the role of fathers in Aotearoa New Zealand?" and "What are the obstacles which prevent men from carrying out the fathering role the way they would like to?" The results identified one main barrier that restricted men from becoming good fathers, namely the stereotyping reinforced by media that it is a woman's role to take care of child(ren), and that men should work to support the family (Chapman, 2000). The focus groups also identified that the fathers who conformed to societal norms and expectations were often unrecognised outside their immediate circles. These fathers often felt unsupported and sometimes they experienced discrimination due to social perceptions that men are strong and should not be receiving handouts in their role as fathers (Chapman, 2000), as stated by one of the Nelson dads: "There's no use expecting a whole pile of people to change when they probably don't know the difference that we [fathers] experience." (p. 10).

Literature quoted in the Nelson/Tasman study mostly focused on an article published by Callister (1995) which analyses the changing roles and lives of Aotearoa New Zealand fathers from a labour perspective. Callister (1998) believed that the changing roles of men resulted from the social implications of the massive sell-off, of state assets by the Labour Government in the 1980's. The same conclusions were reached in the Nelson/Tasman study. Callister (1994) suggests that the increasing unemployment rate in this era was due to the changing political and economic environment which impacted on the changing



home environment, with many men changing their roles and becoming full time parents, commonly referred to as 'House husbands' within New Zealand society. These gender reversal roles had a wide impact on how they viewed their fathering roles (Callister, 1994). Furthermore, the stresses of these changes frequently resulted in men abandoning their relationships as the role of 'house husband' was not an acceptable norm during this time. Many fathers who separated from their partners became financially dependent on social supports (Callister, 1998). However, it was observed over time that social services seemed to work more favourably for sole mothers and did not meet the needs of sole fathers (Griffith, 1997 & Julian, 1999 as cited in Mitchell, Chapman, & McIntosh, 2001; Julian, 1998).

Research into this area concluded that the treatment of sole fathers accessing social services was very different to that of sole mothers; these differences included the way fathers approached applying for supports and their understanding of their entitlements. Furthermore, it was suggested that social service providers should recognise and introduce new support methods when working with fathers, as the social stigma for men asking for help or being on a benefit was frowned upon compared to mothers (Mitchell et al., 2001).

The researcher was unable to find more recent literature on this topic or references in literature subsequently published to the consideration or implementation of these recommendations made 15 years ago. Brickell (1998) suggests that service providers that support parents should adapt to helping fathers "forge their new role in society" (p. 8). The statement made by one of the Nelson fathers included in the study clearly supports the findings of Breiding-Buss (2000) who reported that men are treated differently when engaging with social service supports compared to woman, which was recognised by Callister (1994): "I'm here, I'm a Dad - listen to me" (Chapman, 2000, p. 13). This statement is relevant and important as it asserts that men know what is important to them, and that social services should pay heed to the needs of fathers instead of trying to make sole fathers conform to the needs of mothers.

Some of these differences are around fathers tend to have high expectations of the children, they do not verbalise as much as mothers, they are more direct and use fewer words when expressing their emotions, different parenting styles, for example, they seem to be too tough and have a difference stance on discipline by imposing consequences more quicker and talking later. The overall picture is that dads tend to be more focused around the entire family, and not individually focused when it comes to parenting (Parker, 2016).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the social service system identifies itself around 'Third Way' policies, which is a hands-up and not a hands-out approach to social service supports (Cheyne, O'Brien, & Belgrave, 2005), this will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3, legislation, social worker's duty of care. Gage, Kirk and Hornblow (2009) suggest social services should adapt and provide fathers with services on transformation and health behaviour, for example, the need of wearing seatbelts, as crash records indicate that men are at a higher risk of not wearing seatbelts, which would indicate that they are putting themselves and their children at risk (Campbell, 2012). Furthermore, encouraging the participation of fathers in birth and early parenting, and promote activities of practical and emotional interaction with their children. In addition, they should be promoting the confidence of fathers to build family memories and investigating and developing tools for self-assessment of knowledge and strengths from a generation of knowledge perspective. They should also identify goals as part of family intervention plans, including their wives/partners in fathering initiatives, by encouraging biological and non-biological fathers to be positive role models (Gage et al., 2009). This includes fathers and their decision-making process around family interventions, and finally, promoting opportunities for men to learn more about fatherhood. Page, Whitting and McLean (as cited in Clapton, 2013) refers to the exclusion of fathers in the decision making around the type of supports they need including parenting programs and styles of parenting when interacting with family social services agencies.

Gage et al.'s (2010) study of fatherhood identified that fatherhood is under threat by means of emotional incompetence by not allowing men to voice their opinion and the lack of any physical involvement within the family; which at the same time diminishes a father's personal experiences and their ability to change. Henderson and Brouse's research (1991) around new dad's experiences of becoming a first-time father (as cited in Gage et al., 2009) noted that fathers found it difficult to assimilate information around parenting and how to parent for the first time. Gage et al. (2009), Mitchell and Chapman, (2009) and Davidson and Palmer (2009) suggest that social services should be more responsive to the changes men experience when entering fatherhood.

Fursman and Callister (2009) discuss the changing roles of fathers in parenting and assert that this is directly related to unemployment factors. Unemployment has facilitated or often forced men to take on the parenting role (Breiding-Buss, 2000). They claim that Māori and Pacific Island fathers tend to be over represented in unemployment figures. Breiding-Buss (2000) identifies that men choose to stay in employment rather than going on the DPB. This may be a shame-based response to possible negative reactions from society and the difficulty imposed on sole fathers re-entering the workplace. It appears that mothers receiving Sole Parent supports are far more acceptable to society than single parenting men. Consequently, many fathers experience anxiety over being unemployed and from the stigma associated with being on a benefit. To avoid the shame commonly associated with unemployment and being on a benefit, many fathers choose to stay in employment and struggle raising their child(ren) compared to mothers who felt it was acceptable and their right to receive a benefit (Breiding-Buss, 2000).

Breiding-Buss (2000) identify that one in seven single parents in Aotearoa New Zealand is male. Breiding-Buss (2000) and Birks (2001) highlight the difficulties these single fathers face when trying to access social services. For example, when fathers ask for financial assistance as the primary caregiver, they often fail to receive these supports, as they are not aware of the type of supports available,

and they would be viewed as being incompetent in caring for their children. This was also evidenced by the family's commission report when investigating if fathers understood their entitlements and how to obtain them (Davidson & Palmer, 2009; Mitchell & Chapman, 2009).

With so many restrictions around accessing social services, either through societal expectations or individual's values and norms has stopped fathers from accepting and or accessing social supports, which can be viewed as complex and political. The term social service in Aotearoa New Zealand is used broadly, and does not only include financial support for those that are legally eligible. Social services include a vast array of supports, namely, family, churches, NGO or just having a chat and a cup of tea with local supports groups which play a pivotal part of our social support structures.

### **Social construction**

There are cultures and subcultures within our society which seem to be very complex, and yet they seem to be functional, in the terms of how they get through their everyday lives and are integrated within our society. This could be attributed to the values and norms that individuals grow-up with, or how legislation controls or supports these groups. Therefore, it is important to have a deeper understanding of how these social groups are viewed by discussing a range of social constructions which have formed to support men who happen to be fathers (Šmídová, 2007). These are, social construction of fatherhood, social construction of the traditional western family, social construction of fathering, social construction of separated fathers, social stereotyping of fathers irrespective of sexuality and finally, social construction of gay fathers. Therefore, it is important for social workers to have a deeper understanding of these constructs within our society when supporting men who find themselves in need of social service supports.

## **Social construction of fatherhood**

Fatherhood has changed over the years, notably with more women moving into the workforce (Callister, 1998). This has changed how men understand gender reversal roles of parenting and housekeeping (Woods as cited in Birks & Callister, 1999). In addition, legislation has changed perceptions of fatherhood, with the possibility now of having multiple fathers with a range of sexual identities in a single family. This and related changes can be challenging for certain elements of society, particularly religious groups (Šmídová, 2007).

Since the 1900s the social order for women has changed from a socialist feminist perspective, which viewed women as subject to oppression through class and sex (Nes & Iadicola, 1989), to liberal feminism in which men and women are viewed as having the same potential for achievement (Nes & Iadicola, 1989; Dominelli, 2002). However, this raises the question whether sole fathers face similar discrimination and legal restrictions to that experienced by women; for example, in relation to legal rights and custody of children. Feminist theory might offer insight into how to achieve equal rights for all as it is concerned with understanding oppression in all forms by eliminating artificial sex roles, raising political awareness, and allowing individuals the freedom of choice (Collins, 2002). Social work practices seem to be aligned with feminism that includes, but goes beyond, a commitment to end the victimisation of women and sole fathers wanting to care for their child(ren).

In 1980 Levant presented a paper at the Annual Meeting of the International Congress of Psychology (July 22, 1980, Leipzig, West Germany), in which he described his views on the male role in parenting, including the choice not to parent at all. He defined the traditional roles of fathers and their influence on the development of children. Levant's presentation is significant because he introduced a different perspective of male parenting outside the 'normal' role of husband and wife to that of a father through adoption, custody or divorce; 35 years later society is still struggling with most of these expected changes. This

could be due to the strong western Christian beliefs that are imposed on society around fatherhood (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Locke, 2005; McCleary & Barro, as cited in Gaduh, 2012).

In this century men are faced with obstacles under legislation which restrict them from becoming a 'legal family' or becoming a parent. This is discussed in more detail in chapter three, legislation. Research by McLennan, Ryan, and Spoonley (2004) outlined the parenting and custodial arrangements and experiences of lesbian parents, including their custodial roles as mothers. This seems to be a more common experience and well-documented situation than fathers. Additionally, arrangements made in obtaining sperm donors and the legal and moral implications were addressed with the sperm donor and mothers to be. Father's rights as sperm donors are discussed in more detail in chapter 3, legislation, The Human Assisted Reproduction Technology Act 2004. In addition, men using surrogates to become fathers are constrained under the Citizenship Act 1977 (s.1-3). If the female is not an Aotearoa New Zealand citizen or permanent resident then the child is not seen as a New Zealander and cannot enter or remain in Aotearoa New Zealand, unless a residency permit is obtained. The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 (s.1-2) also leaves men with limited legal rights in becoming parents or creating families as the rights of the mother and child are considered foremost before that of fathers (Dunedin Community Law, 2005; Human Rights Commission, 2010).

### **Social construction of the traditional western family**

To achieve some form of clarity regarding 'what is the role of man', society has predetermined male roles by social conditioning often based on western Christian beliefs (Locke, 2005; Starr, 2016). Akerlof and Kranton (2000), McCleary and Barro (2006) as cited in Gaduh (2012) suggest that "for believers, religion is both a source of individual values and social identity" (p. 3). The traditional western Christian roles of man and wife as discussed by Davies (n.d., para. 3) and

Locke (2005), that man is viewed as the head of the household, with his wife being his subordinate, flow from this construct.

Stanhope and Lancaster (1996) suggest that culture includes a community's beliefs, values and customs. Giddens (2001) states that culture plays a significant role in perpetuating the 'values and norms' of a society and it also offers important opportunities for creativity and change. Sub-cultures and countercultural groups, which largely challenge a society's prevailing 'values and norms' can promote views that show alternatives to the dominant culture, hence, culture may have both positive and negative effects on the social construction of sole fathers and their supports. Traditional western beliefs might curb the ways these constructs constrain and/or enable sole fathers by ensuring well organised support systems. Dlamini (2002) identifies that traditional cultures are transitioning to be more accepting and inclusive of western society. The transitional process results in uncertainty in the minds of different community members, for example, how to cope with sole fathers. Similarly, gay culture must adapt to fatherhood and gender roles that challenge the traditional stereotypes within the gay community of being free and flamboyant, by embracing the Heteronormativity<sup>3</sup> lifestyle (Buckley, 2013).

The importance of understanding societal values is about exploring religious ideologies that still linger in the background of individual minds, as these ideologies inform what is perceived as 'normal' or 'not normal' when it comes to identifying families (Locke, 2005). Giddens (2001) offers some clarity about socialisation, which is the process by which children learn the culture of their society from adults who transfer the values and norms of the society they live in. Therefore, for society to accept the concept of single men or gay men as parents becoming a norm, they must be exposed to these changes in a positive environment. Socialisation teaches humans how to live in a society and what is regarded as appropriate behaviour in different situations (Leavell & Tamis-

---

<sup>3</sup>Heteronormativity is the belief that genders fall into the natural roles of man and wife.

LeMonda, 2013). Different institutions influence an individual's behaviour, namely family, peer groups, mass media, schools and religions. Giddens (2001) and Lindegger (2006) refer to culture as the way of life which members of a society or groups live within their civilisation; this includes how people dress, marriage customs and family life, their patterns of work, religious ceremonies, and leisure pursuits. Jung's (as cited in Morrell & Richter, 2006) archetypes of the roles fathers and mothers play within society confirm this concept of Heteronormativity.

Morrell and Richter (2006) suggest that fatherhood is a human, social and cultural role, considering Carl Jung's notion of the father as an archetype. This archetype maps out the known requirements and expectations of being a father through religion, morals and social systems, considering those individual experiences which change across generations. This can be viewed as social construction, which attempts to place ideas about our social understanding around alternative futures (Gergen, 2001).

### **Social construction of fathering**

The role of fathers in Aotearoa New Zealand changed after the First World War and can be linked to the economic changes within the labour market and changes that welcomed the increasing number of women entering the workforce (Callister, 1995). This in turn changed the concept of fair wage, a definition of which was enshrined in legislation and established the obligation for a man supporting his wife and one to three children (Woods as cited in Birks & Callister, 1999). This notion of men as the breadwinner is still prevalent in the psyche of our society, leaving many fathers struggling to spend adequate time with their children (Breiding-Buss, 2000; Callister, 1999). Many men respond to this social conditioning by working long hours in multiple jobs to meet the expectation of them as the breadwinner. This process has been exacerbated by the effects of rampant consumerism and the negative social affects left on our society if one does not keep up with the Jones's (Davidson & Palmer, 2004).



## **Social construction of separated fathers**

Society's norms have established a precedent for how a family is created and the roles of heteronormativity, which has been normalised by society and legislation. Mitchell and Chapman (2009) identify that there is significant difference between the experiences of fathers compared to mothers when separating from their wives: The father is less prepared for the separation; he is not in favour of the separation, due to the changing norms and his role as breadwinner, husband and father; increasingly, his children choose not to live with him. Current discussions and focus groups are addressing these concerns of only placing child(ren) in their mother's care, as it was viewed that mothers are frequently awarded full custody, while fathers gain only limited access and visitation rights (Amato, 2004; Hetherington, 2003; Smyth, 2004, as cited in Mitchell & Chapman, 2009; Pettitt, 2000). Meyer and Garasky (1991) identified five commonly held truisms about fathers after they had separated/divorced from their wives/partners and the stigma associated by society, which was upheld by McGill's (2011) research:

The first truism identifies that fathers have higher incomes than mothers. A comprehensive study completed by the Treasury in New Zealand introduced a model called the 'Integration of Income Elasticity Results' using data from Dunedin study participants (Gibson, 2010). The study took a longitudinal approach of people born in Dunedin between 1972 and 1973. The results suggested that income for men and women are comparable to other developed countries but that male participants received a proportionally higher income than woman participants. The 2006 Census in Aotearoa New Zealand also found this to be true, showing that men earned on average \$31,500 compared to \$19,100 for women (Statistics New Zealand, 2014b). Due to the nature of the report it was unable to determine if single fathers accessing social service supports receive the same benefits as single mothers, however, the report determined that women received a higher rate per hour when working part-time compared to men. In addition, WINZ is encouraging their clients to take up part time work while taking care of their children (Ministry of Social Development, 2016e).

Second, there are not many custodial fathers. Birks and Callister (1999) state “as long as the focus is on custody being awarded to one parent, with the other not having an effective parenting role, there is a danger that any perceived solution might be one in which more fathers had custody” (p. 133). In Aotearoa New Zealand there seems to be a disparity in the awarding of custodial care. The Courts appear to favour the mother for reasons mainly informed by a view that fathers generally create negative environments (Mitchell & Chapman, 2009). Pettitt (2000) suggests that this notion is based on “personal sexism”, namely that police are dismissive of fathers who report physical abuse at the hands of their female partners. Moreover, shame prevents many men from reporting the physical abuse to which they are subjected by their wives or girlfriends. Chapter three discusses legislation around violence and the impacts to both father and children in more detail. The failure of our legal system to address spousal abuse by women weakens the position of fathers who have been abused when applying for custody of their child(ren).

Third, fathers often remarry, resulting in less contact with their children over time (Kelly, 2000). This is often due to the relocation of a parent, remarriage, persistent legal conflicts between the parents, and the typical decline found in father and child relationships. Twin (2011 as cited in Fabricious & Luecken 2002) identified that the relationship between non-custodial fathers and their children weakened after they engaged with a new partner. Amato (2004) identifies remarriage as very stressful on the new family, with the female partner’s children experiencing the stepfather as dominating their mother’s time and struggling with feelings of disloyalty towards their biological father.

Fourth, most sole fathers are widowers. Davey (1999) notes that widowed parents with children seem to receive more sympathy from society than do parents who have separated or are unmarried. Davey (1999) also notes that sole parenthood is becoming increasingly rare due to the lower levels of “mortality in the childrearing groups, but it may still be significant in relation to sole father

families (among sole parent recipients of the DPB a higher proportion of males are widowed compared to females)” (p. 106).

Finally, fathers primarily receive custody of older boys. When it comes to custody, Davey (1999) notes that the gender distribution of younger children between mothers and fathers seems to be balanced; there is no clear evidence of any increasing proportion of boys living with their sole fathers. This seems to be justified by the norm for younger children to be cared for by their mothers and the ever-increasing norm for male role models for pubescent boys.

Meyer and Garasky (1991) identify the effects these commonly held truisms have on fatherhood and the effects of societal change on policy, as well as the implications on the children and men creating families. This United States report outlines the changes in the Court’s disposition on awarding the amount for Child Support and paternity rights. The Courts must adhere to The Child Support Act 1991 which outlines the annual amount of child support and the rate of child support that needs to be paid. Meyer and Garasky (1991) identify the need for further research in this field, as the belief regarding the Court only providing custody to the mothers seems to be false. In Aotearoa New Zealand, however, the belief that men are more likely than women to cause harm to their children still appears to be informing decisions about issues of custody (Nelson, 2013).

### **Social stereotyping of fathers’ sexuality**

Breiding-Buss (2000) identifies gender-related preferences in parenting, with fathers becoming parents to their sons and mothers to their daughters. This is attributable mainly to socially held stereotypes of parenting. A further social stereotype was that children raised by gay and lesbian parents exhibited different cognitive and social development. However, Henrickson (2005) concluded that there are no disparities between the children raised by gay and straight parents, dispelling yet another stereotype. Nonetheless, negative public perceptions of gay fathers exist, due to fears surrounding the propensity of gay men to commit acts of paedophilia and incest (Witchel, 2011).

Parker and Parker (as cited in Callister, 1995) discuss the benefits of children having their fathers in their early lives. Callister (1995) and Hobbs, Hobbs and Wynne (1999) suggest that men who are involved with the physical care of their children under the age of three are less likely to sexually abuse children, including their own.

### **Social construction of gay fathers**

Armesto (2000), Bozett (1993), Marsiglio, Amato, Day and Lamb (2000) (as cited in Armesto & Shapiro, 2011) identifies that literature on gay men becoming fathers seems to be more focused on their 'coming-out' experiences rather than on the discourse they face in becoming fathers in the context of heteronormativity. Several research projects have been conducted globally on the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexed and Queer (GLBTIQ) community around their parenting (Henrickson, 2005, para. 23), naming a few, Queer parenting: Non-traditional parenting styles and their impacts on childhood bullying (2015) by Dunn; Sexual violence and gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer communities (2012) by Fileborn; Lesbian and gay parenting (2005) by the American Psychological Association; and Aotearoa New Zealand's own Lavender Study (2005) by Henrickson.

The 'Lavender Parents Study' (LPS) is one of the largest Gay Lesbian Bisexual (GLB) studies to take place in Aotearoa New Zealand. The study examines how lesbians and gay men are creating and maintaining families in Aotearoa New Zealand (Henrickson, 2005). The research identified three themes: Firstly, how LGB families are formed; secondly, how LGB families are maintained; and finally, the accomplishments and challenges LGB families face. The LPS included GLB individuals of all races, cultures and beliefs, and focused particularly on relationship and parenting questioning. The published findings of the LPS identified that a quarter of the participants were parenting children who were either conceived via artificial insemination or acquired through adoption and the participants were either within a de-facto relationship or were co-parenting existing biological children conceived in former heterosexual relationships (Henrickson, 2005). Many single men, who chose, either to adopt, or to 'give-up'

their parental rights for adoption, will find themselves engaged with social services. Therefore, it is important to offer these men the appropriate services, and to define their legal rights when doing so as unwed fathers (Adoption, 2016). Henrickson (2005) illustrates that more and more LGB individuals are creating families and raising children. It is therefore crucial to conduct further detailed research twelve years on to view how the growing diversity within the GLBTIQ community are creating and maintain their families in Aotearoa New Zealand, in relation to the changes to legislation that supports same sex marriages and unions. Henrickson (2005) emphasises that greater knowledge will act as a medium to inform society, potentially removing the stigma associated with the capabilities of LGB parents to raise children. Henrickson (2005) did not include the roles of transsexuals and transgender individuals have in the LGB community and what impacts sexual orientation has on their lives in our society. It is unclear whether Henrickson (2005) omitted these groups on the assumption that all Heteronormativity is the belief that genders fall into the natural roles of man and woman, husband or wife.

International studies (Miller, 1979) within the LGBT community have been undertaken on the effects of same-sex parenting on children, and closer to home, namely, 'quality of parenting', research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (Daily Mail, 2016), The Australian study of child health in same-sex families (Child, Family Community Australia, 2013) and within Aotearoa New Zealand, Family First's Same-Sex Parenting: Unpacking the Social Science (Family First, 2015). Henrickson's research (2005) is focused on whether psychosocial differences are evident between gay and straight parenting, and the potential effects this might have on children.

The HRC (2010) affirms the United Nations (UN) position on equality for all as well as the inclusion of international law practices and recourse to law for individuals disadvantaged by their sexual orientation and gender. Religious groups like 'Focus on the Family New Zealand' are vigorously opposed to gay and lesbians becoming parents as they believe it is not in the best interest of children to be exposed to

homosexuality (Focus on the Family New Zealand, 2009). They believe that gay and lesbian parents could nurture children to become homosexual themselves (Focus on the Family New Zealand, 2009). Destiny Church released a video in 2011 which delineated their overt political and anti-gay religious doctrines and recently their overt policy of being gay in Christchurch caused the on-going earthquakes (New Zealand Herald, 2016). The Catholic Church has stated that preventing same-sex couples from adopting is a form of 'positive discrimination' (News Talk ZB, 2009).

Despite evidence of a historically progressive attitude towards alternative sexuality in Māoridom, Herewini (2007) discusses Māori church leaders' opinions who are outspoken opponents of homosexuality and who the Ratana Church both take a political stand against homosexual reforms. There are a few opinions about homosexual behaviour in Māoridom, one being dominated by early Western church representations that pre-European Māori were exclusively heterosexual (Aspin, 2007) and that deviation from this norm was punishable by death. The second opinion is dominated by academics who state that pre-European Māori society was inclusive and that sexual diversity was embraced (Aspin & Hutchings, 2006). Meads (2003) says that while heterosexuality was the norm and that sexuality was expressed through marriage, homosexuality was tolerated before colonisation. This view has been dismissed by research on pre-European Māori sexuality and the evidence presented in their oral literature and whakairo (Te Awekotuku, 2005).

Mead (2003) discusses how Māori have always had a different level of flexibility when it comes to gender, as occupations were not viewed as gender-specific and hence there were no stigma attached to men or women in roles that in Western society are viewed as the exclusive preserve of either men or women. Aspin (2007) believes that takatāpui, (the word includes the full range of alternative sexualities: bisexual, homosexual, transgender and intersex individuals. The distinction between the meaning of the word takatāpui and its English equivalent 'queer' points to profound differences between Māori cultures and beliefs and

those of Pakeha), appear to maintain strong relationships with their whānau (family) and that this protects them from ostracism by other tribes unfamiliar with their whakapapa (genealogy). Mead (2003) states that through their whakapapa, individuals will always have a place in the world and a position within their whānau, hapu (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe), and that this is inalienable. This includes a natural place, turangawaewae (the area that is a person's home), as well as their identity and their right to participate in their customs and beliefs (Smith & Te Awekotuku as cited in Mead, 2003). Therefore, it is important as social workers to be underpinned by the cultural aspects of being takatāpui, and how this can impact them on accessing social services and how the whānau would perceive them being sole fathers. Hutchings and Aspin (2007) translate the word takatāpui as an intimate companion of the same sex. Aspen, Reid, Hughes and Worth (as cited in Aspin & Hutchings, 2007) identified that 51% of Māori who identified as gay or lesbian preferred the word takatāpui when expressing their sexual identity. The Māori men in Aspin's study (2005) were primary urban-based and chose the word takatāpui to be more connected to the gay community, while 49% of Māori remaining did not. Aspin (2005) further identifies that takatāpui played a prominent role in their whānau, hapu and iwi by having a strong attachment to Māoridom.

Alice and Star (2004) and Jacobs (as cited in Aspin, 2004) identified the revival of the word takatāpui, which was once thought to be lost within the modern Te Reo language. They further identified that before the arrival of European New Zealander's Māori, takatāpui were not uncommon within their society and that alternative sexuality was not considered aberrant by hapu and iwi. However, this changed after colonisation and the introduction of Anglo-Saxon Christianity. The introduction of Christianity to Māoridom seems to have had an everlasting effect on Tikanga. Hutchinson and Aspin (2007) see the repression of information about Māori sexual diversity because of colonisation. They state that colonisation has established the "current diversity of sexual expression and identity among Māori, current opinions towards sexuality, and the effect of those on Māori communities"

(p. 15-21), meaning that many Māori have integrated Pakeha beliefs into their own culture and society.

It is important that social workers have a wider knowledge and understanding of the struggles men in general face when trying to maintain their families, this includes the narrative around Māori takatāpui and gay men who have experienced discrimination in the form of gender bias and alienation, to those around their sexuality, that believe it is the role of fathers to stand alone and be strong when caring for their families.

### **Chapter summary**

A review of empirical and theoretical literature sources on fathers, custodial, single or sole was completed to identify what was known about the challenges they faced when accessing social services. This was to ascertain if any negative discourses socially construct sole fathers, either gay or straight, and by identifying in what ways these constructions constrain and or enable custodial fathers in taking care of their families. Aotearoa New Zealand social services are mostly administered by the MSD and within the current political changes to legislation is impacting on organisations and service delivery. The changes to beneficiary system are viewed as a 'hands-up' and not a 'hands-out' approach, and beneficiaries are struggling to meet the daily allowances offered to take care of their families. The MSD has created a police checking environment to stop beneficiary fraud with the help from the public.

Men accessing supports do so reluctantly, as they are aware of the stigma associated with being on a benefit, and the preconceived views of being treated unfairly distract them from seeking additional supports, and tend to struggle alone. The social construction of being a man has identified what supports and rights custodial fathers need, or the impacts of religion, legislation and society's disposition toward them. The literature shows that within our ever-changing society, men are nowadays taking on roles predominantly and historically from a western perspective viewed as feminine. Likewise, women are increasingly



taking on roles historically held by men, a parallel development that is also challenging for some members of our society. Furthermore, our view of modern society in Aotearoa New Zealand is erasing the traditional boundaries between genders since the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013 was enacted. These social changes have resulted in the increasing number of men creating new types of families and structures within our communities. The challenge for society within this context is to be more accepting of men as fathers in a non-traditional family setting and how they access social service supports. Literature offered additional insight in formulating the interview questions around social stigma sole father's face when engaging with social services that are underpinned by societal norms, legislation and religious views. The next chapter will discuss the legal system in Aotearoa New Zealand and Acts that either support or hinder the process of sole fathers accessing supports and taking care of their child(ren).

## **Chapter Three: Legislation**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. This chapter will commence with the importance of social workers understanding Aotearoa New Zealand law, and how this underpinning is essential for social workers to support individuals and their families. This will be followed by the structure and purpose of Aotearoa New Zealand's legal system around the governance of our society, and the introduction of New Zealand Act that will offer some insight around the different forms of legislation that can hinder or support men, who have chosen to become fathers.

These fathers consist of biological, whānau (family), adoptive parents, caregivers who chose to parent alone, and engaged or required some form of social services supports from statutory or non-government agencies to enable them support their families. Braye and Preston-Shoot (2009) notes that it is difficult for individuals to adapt to and work within the changing world of law within any country. Laws change over time, as do the dynamics and political environments that individuals find themselves living in. Therefore, individuals must become adaptive and conscious of the changing laws they live in, and by not doing so, can fall victim of breaking these laws to achieve what many parents view as being normal when trying to conceive and create a family.

### **Social worker's duty of care**

Braye and Preston-Shoot (2009) refer to the ethical duty of care in social work regarding the law and defining the mandate; as well as how law shapes individuals' behaviours and attitudes and defines what type of society individuals live in. Social workers would struggle to carry out their functions for advocacy and empowerment if they were not aware of government legislation and the impacts they can have on individuals in their everyday lives (Roche, 2001). Therefore, it is beneficial for social workers to ethically and effectively

understand how law can be used to support different client's self-determination, human rights and challenge discrimination (Connolly & Harms, 2009), and in this case, the rights of men who have taken up the role of sole fathers who have engaged with social services to support their families.

Therefore, it is important to understand how the legal system in Aotearoa New Zealand functions around a social service which is based on Third-Way policy. Third-way is based on a hands-up and not a hands-out system, which is viewed as a political position which tries to go beyond and above right and left-wing politics by favouring a mixture of right-wing and left-wing economic policies (Pierson & Castle, 2007). To some extent, 'Third-way' is defined by the relationship to the political and social philosophies of old style 'Left' such as 'Socialism' and the 'New Right' such as 'Neo-Liberalism' which is viewed as being in favour of free-market capitalism (Giddens, 2007). Third-Way is believed to be a way of governing that promotes equal opportunity for all, while granting special privilege for none (Bonoli, 2007). It is an ethic of mutual responsibility that equally rejects the politics of entitlement and the politics of social abandonment (Lister, 2007). It is an approach to governing that empowers citizens to act for themselves when applying for social service supports (Epsing-Andersen, 2007). Social workers will find themselves challenged, due to the restriction and philosophy of Third-way thinking, when trying to comprehend the ten core competencies outlined by the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) (2008) and the ANZASW (2008), when being competent in practicing social work. These restrictions include how the regulating processes of social work is practised in the public sector and in doing so, limiting the social work role to assessing and managing risks (Jordan, 2001).

### **Social construction of Aotearoa New Zealand law**

Legislation is dictated around the current social and political environment we live in. Laws are enacted to control our population and to obtain a commonality in structure and formality to keep the population in check and under control, as without structure, there would be chaos (Scragg, 2005). Therefore, laws can be

viewed as institutionalised norms that establish parameters around social action to promote social cohesion. As Lawrence (2004) suggests “laws tend to reflect moral, social, economic and political values and trying to give effect to them” (p. 96).

Aotearoa New Zealand’s legal system consists of three sources of law: Custom, common and statute law (Scragg, 2005). The main forms of legislation in Aotearoa New Zealand are statutes, which are Acts of Parliament (Scragg, 2005). There are three arms of government, namely, the Parliament, Executive and Judiciary (Wood & Rudd, 2004), which provide checks and balances to make sure that not just one arm of government holds more power over the other. Acts are made by parliament which is the legislative body that make up the laws, while the executive introduces and controls the laws; and the judiciary applies the laws (Scragg, 2005).

Braye and Preston-Shoot (2009) refer to the purpose and outcomes within the tensions of law as law is a product of “political and moral debates or controversies. It speaks volumes about the society in which it exists” (p. 91). Additionally, there are frameworks of laws and policies that are found in organisations which define the construction of social service delivery, which are derived from Acts of Law and define and influence how individuals see social justice (Beckett & Maynard, 2005). Whereby, the law determines the nature, extent of the preventative, protective and rehabilitative intervention towards the individual (Braye & Preston-Shoot, 2009).

### **An Introduction to Aotearoa New Zealand Acts impacting sole fathers**

There are many Acts that impact on our daily lives which we accept without question, such as the Land Transport Act 1998, which determines what side of the road we drive on. The following Acts have moral and personal connections to sole fathers, as they shape and construct how a family looks like, how they

choose to live, and what supports are available to individuals in supporting their families.

The following Acts will be discussed in two parts, namely, the purpose and implications: The Social Security Act 1964, The Adoption Act 1995, The Children, Young, Persons and their Families Act 1989, The Care of Children Act 2004, Family Proceedings Act 1980, The Domestic Violence Act 1995, The Human Rights Act 1993, Human Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2004, The Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 1955. These Acts will be discussed in detail to unpack their respective roles in governing marriage, creation of families and the impacts on sole fathers accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **Social Security Act 1964**

Purpose: The Social Security (SS) Act 1964 has become an important part of Aotearoa New Zealand society as a means of providing social welfare to those that are deemed vulnerable and in need of social supports. In July 2013, there were new changes in applying for supports. The current administrator for this service is Work and Income (WINZ). WINZ is responsible for administering a range of benefits including, Child Disability Allowance, Jobseeker Support, Superannuation, Orphan's Benefit, Sole Parent Support, Support Living Payments, Unsupported Child Benefit, Veterans Pension, Young Parent and Youth payments. The Social Security Act therefore will have an impact on every Aotearoa New Zealanders during their lifetime from applying for study or receiving their superannuation, and more to the point, sole fathers when accessing social services, for example, applying for working for tax credits, benefit supports or the Court system.

Implications: The SS Act 1964 is clearly defined on what entitlements are available to individuals seeking supports; however, it does not include any grey areas outside of the interpretation of the law, and during these times, clarity or

approval is required by the case or site managers. It is these human interpretations by case and site managers that can leave applicants feeling vulnerable, hence why many men chose not to engage with the service (Jones, 2015). Furthermore, as with every 'hands-up' there are obligations linked to those vulnerable individuals in need when receiving social service funding. For example, Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) beneficiaries sign a contract of obligation to seek work, and failure to do so will result in penalties, and those found not following their obligation could lead to overpayments whereby the Social Welfare (Transitional Provisions) (SWTP) Act 1990 addresses any overpayments that may have occurred. If failure to repay these obligations occurs beneficiaries could find themselves being pursued by the Department for collection (SWTP Act 1990, s.86), as many sole fathers seem to work full or part-time, and inadvertently not declaring or reporting their income leads to overpayments as well (Jones, 2015). Nelson (2013), identified that the needs of fathers are different to those of mothers, and this includes their behaviours, the way they are approached, the types of supports requested when men try to access social service supports to care for their child(ren) (Mitchell et al., 2001).

### **The Adoption Act 1955**

Purpose: The Adoption Act 1955 regulates who can be adopted and by whom. It outlines the process of adoption from the initial application to the Interim Order that is made, to the Adoption Orders which are approved after one year. The Act also outlines the roles of the Courts, CYFs, as well as the applicants who are the child, the biological parents and the adoptive parents.

Implications: Society has changed and there are biological and non-biological men that are caring for children who find themselves restricted by The Adoption Act 1955. Children that have been placed in their care, either through the Family Courts or Child, Youth and Family services (CYFs), for example, having a day-to-day care or joint custody, find that they are restricted in making crucial decisions that impact their lives. For example, if they wish to travel overseas, they

cannot apply for the child's passport directly, as the biological parents still have rights, causing a lengthy process of approvals from a variety of departments, leaving the carer stressed and emotionally drained. These actions are putting more stresses on social service supports as these carers require additional help when caring for our children. The question that needs to be addressed is, that if CYFs is placing children in the care of single men, why is the key provision under Section 3-14 in The Adoption Act 1955 so restrictive of single men adopting and obtaining Adoption Orders (Henrickson, 2005; von Dadelszen, 2009).

The Adoption Act 1955 excludes the notion of single men becoming parents and as such affects all men, not just gay men, wishing to have a family (Perz, 2001; Locke, 2005). The Adoption Act 1955 discriminated against men (HRC, 2010) by disallowing non-biological related men to adopt or foster children (HRC, 2010; Adoption Act 1955, s.1-3). This seems to originate from ideas around what a family should look like, by having a mother and father. It is these ideas and related policies that inform society about what is 'normal' and 'not normal' (Wills, 2007). Therefore, it can be argued that religious beliefs that encumber the Adoption Act 1955 are about male parenting stereotypes based upon the era they were enacted (HRC, 2010; Von Dadelszen, 2009), which still influence decisions about whether men, either straight or gay, should adopt or foster children which according to Witchel (2011) is still based on Heteronormativity parenting stereotypes.

The Adoption Act 1955 contradicts Human Rights and International Conventions (The Law Commission, 1999). For example, single males regardless of their sexuality are not allowed to adopt a child under the Act, which is in breach of freedom of choice and sexual orientation according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2011). It also contradicts more modern Aotearoa New Zealand legislation, for example, the Care of Children's Act 2004, which aims to offer a child a voice who are cognitively able to do so, in determining which parent is best to care for their children (Davies, 2016) is questionable. According to the White Paper for Vulnerable Children (2012) the voices of the children and their

representation partly shaped this landmark legislation but were all the children's voices heard. In addition, our children were not consulted around where they would like to live and with whom. Which is now under review by the MSD, and many fathers group are in favour of these changes (Young, 2015; Falck, 2015; Davies, 2016). Furthermore, in 2008, the proposed Adoption Amendment Bill was dropped after having been on the ballot in Parliament for two years which led to Family Court Judge von Dadelszen advocating for an amendment to the Adoption Act 1955, describing it as unjustly discriminatory and obsolete (von Dadelszen, 2009). In a speech given at the 'Families in Transition Seminar', von Dadelszen (2009) explained that the Adoption Act 1955 was representative of the norms and values held by society in the era when it was developed and that it contradicted the values held by today's society, and should be amended to include all loving adults that wish to care for a child be granted the same rights as those currently depicted in the Act.

Even though The Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013 was enacted, and there currently are no legal impediments to LGBTIQ individuals from applying to adopt a child, the stigma associated with this sort of adoption remains (The Department of Internal Affairs, 2015). Von Dadelszen (2009) states that the adoption process is lengthy and that the suitability of placements is based on an evaluation of those who apply to adopt. Applicants must be deemed fit and proper based on social workers' Court Reports (The Adoption Act 1955, s. 10(1)(a)). The final decision for adoption is determined by the presiding judge's opinion of what is best for the child (Von Dadelszen). Von Dadelszen (2009) states that the process for adoption should not be different for same-sex couples and argues that adoption orders should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and that simply rejecting a potentially loving relationship because of sexual orientation is in breach of an individual's freedom and violates their basic human rights.

### **Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989**

The Child, Young Persons, and Their Families (CYPF) Act 1989 will be discussed in two parts, namely, Care and Protection and Youth Justice:



## Care and Protection

Purpose: The CYPF Act 1989 was enacted on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1989. The Act defines a child as a boy or girl under the age of fourteen; a young person as a boy/girl between ages of fourteen to seventeen (does not include anyone married or that has been married or is in a civil union); a family group is the immediate family (biological or legal), extended family (whānau) and any other person who is significant in the child's life (s.2). The Act was enacted with the objective of promoting the well-being of children, young persons, and their families by establishing and promoting services and facilities that are appropriate, accessible and culturally sensitive; by assisting parents, families, whānau, hapu, and iwi, to keep their children safe; and by providing protection for the child or young-person from harm or abuse (s.4). The CYPF Act 1989 is currently under review (New Zealand Parliament, 2016), and Minister Tolley (2016) wishes to include that the:

State responsibility for the care and protection of vulnerable young persons, ensures that vulnerable children and young persons can have their views considered as part of decision making and the development of departmental services and policy, and enables enhanced access to appropriate specialist skills and expertise to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and young persons.

Implications: The CYPF Act 1989 is linked with many other Aotearoa New Zealand Acts relating to the care and protection of children in care. For example, the Adoption Act 1955, is closely linked with the Family Court which can request the CYFs social workers to complete an assessment and report for the Court in determining the best placement of child(ren) (s.4, 5,10,11). Many men who separate/divorce or wish to take care of their children find themselves engaged in one or more of these statutory agencies. This can take place in the form of a Family Group Conference (FGCs) and can have relevance to future parenting orders (Child, Young Person and Family Act 1989, s.18). In FGCs, it was noted that men who robustly defended their positions were viewed as controlling, dominant

and manipulating, by the CYFs social workers who were present, which had a direct impact on their parenting orders as disclosed in the Care of Children Act 2004 (Carswell, Hinerangi, Gray, & Taylor, 2013). Further information on men finding themselves associated with statutory social services are discussed in chapters five and six.

Due to society's perception around men being violent (Murphy, Paton, Gulliver, & Fanslow, 2013), there seems to be a tendency of reporting on fathers with children, either out of real concerns or malicious notification from their partners (Carswell et al., 2013). CYFs have an obligation to investigate these allegations around safety concerns for the child(ren). Furthermore, CYFs can be ordered by the Court to complete home assessments around the placement and safety of a child(ren) (The Adoption Act 1955, (s.10 (1a))). CYFs themselves can make referrals to non-government agencies offering men supports (Child, Youth and Family, 2016). CYFs needs to explore alternative approaches when working with men instead of ordering them to attend anger management courses (MacLennan, 2016). They should be offering counselling or support groups on how to cope with the situations they find themselves in.

### **Youth Justice**

Purpose: This is the second part of the CYPF Act 1989, referred to as Youth Justice that addresses youth offending while trying to keep the child or young person out of the court system (CYPF Act 1989). Under this Act, a child is aged between 10 and 13 years old, and a young person is aged between 14 and 16 years old (CYPF Act, 1989, s.2). Historically, this Act emerged from a welfare model which took the view that youth offending is abnormal and indicates deeper problems that may need to be identified and treated to prevent re-offending (Ministry of Social Development, 2016f).

Implication: Research identifies that higher rates of youth offending are associated with single parenting, the lack of social structures and positive parenting; especially the lack of positive male role-models for their child(ren),

and the importance of having a father figure in their child(ren)'s lives (Becroft, 2006). These findings indicate that many sole parents find themselves engaged with statutory and non-government agencies in the hope of supporting them and their families through these difficult times.

### **Care of Children Act 2004**

Purpose: The provisions of the Care of Children Act (2004) are child-centred and represent an unmistakable shift towards the recognition of greater rights for children and allows for their greater input in the decision-making processes (New Zealand Ministry of Justice, 2006). The Courts have a mandatory duty to give children a reasonable opportunity to express their views and to take those views into appropriate consideration. The child's best interests and welfare is the first paramount consideration in administering the statute (s.3(2)(c)). For interpreting the Act, a child is deemed to be under the age of 18 unless specifically stated (s.8). New provisions emphasise the responsibilities towards the child rather than the parent's/guardian's rights against a child (New Zealand Ministry of Justice, 2006). The old label of 'custody' is replaced with 'parenting order', and a 'contact order' replaces the old label of 'access' and recognises the importance of each parent having an on-going role (Boshier, 2009).

Implications: The Act recognises that parents have the primary responsibility for the care of their children. When parents separate and there is a disagreement about the children's care, the Family Court can be asked to make a parenting order. A Parenting Order is made by the Family Court and states who is responsible for the day-to-day care of a child and when and how someone else important in the child's life can have contact (New Zealand Ministry of Justice, 2009a). Sole fathers can find themselves engaged in statutory agencies with regards to custody dispute and find that this Act becomes very relevant in their everyday lives, on who has day-to-day care and custody over their child(ren).

A parenting order can prevent a parent/guardian removing a child from New Zealand or concealing their whereabouts, or can enforce the return of a child deemed to be wrongfully removed (Boshier, 2009). The importance of the Care of Children's Act 2004 is that it is currently at the forefront of changes to our social service system for our child(ren) in care and the Family Court system (Davies, 2016). Fathers groups, for example, *Father and Child* have welcomed these changes, in the hope that the breakdown in relationships between a mother and father can be bypassed, by stopping parents from utilising their child(ren) as a pawn against each other around access and day-to-day care. This would offer fathers a greater chance and choice to take care of their child(ren), and therefore, support creating families with sole fathers (Young, 2015, para. 1-4).

### **Family Proceedings Act 1980**

Purpose: The Family Proceedings Act 1980 and The Family Proceedings Amendment Act 2008 are Acts to regulate the grounds of and procedures for dissolution of marriages and civil unions. Prior to any dissolution, the Court must be satisfied that the care of any child(ren) is adequately provided for. The Act outlines the duty of all legal parties and the Courts to promote reconciliation and conciliation. The Act enforces the engagement of social services with several counselling sessions for both parties, as well as mediation conferences. The Act provides for the care and maintenance of child(ren) and spouses including enforcement of maintenance orders here in Aotearoa New Zealand and those parents living overseas. Groups subject to the Act consist of those who are married, in a civil union and in a de facto relationship and or have child(ren) (Family Proceedings Act 1980, s.1-11).

Implications: MENZ (2001) identified research (Birks, 2001) into the disparities in treatment in the Family Court experienced by single fathers who had obtained Court Orders as the primary caregiver or who shared custody with the mother of

the child. The findings echoed research completed in New Zealand by Pettitt's (2000), that men faced biases within the Court system, for example, the Courts were supportive towards women and did not believe men who asserted that they were victims of spousal violence and abuse. Furthermore, the Court much more regularly awarded custody to mothers based on social worker's reports favouring mothers; a potential bias was identified as these reports were mainly written by women. Also, that service providers mainly employed women who were not skilled at working effectively with men, and that many were believed to advance their own agendas ending up in fathers having their children removed or placed in government care (Pettitt, 2000). These types of action resulted in fathers accessing social services for support and many believed engaging with CYFs is the best option in the hope that they would support them in obtaining their child(ren) (Rebstock, 2015). However, in this circumstance it is not the mandate of CYFs to act or investigate who is the best parent for the child.

### **The Domestic Violence Act 1995**

*Purpose:* The Domestic Violence Act (1995) seeks to protect individuals from physical, sexual and psychological violence that have, or are living in a domestic relationship (Department of Corrections, n.d.; Domestic Violence Act, 1995, s. 4; Police n.d.). Relationships covered by the Act include married couples, de facto couples, civil union couples, parents, children, family members, flatmates as well as relatives or other close relationships that do or do not live together (Domestic Violence Act, 1995, s. 4; Ministry of Justice, 2007). The Act refers to violence of a physical, sexual and psychological nature. Sexual abuse includes all sexual contact that the applicant did not agree to (Ministry of Justice, 2007). Psychological abuse encompasses abuse between partners, and this may include the wilful damage of the applicant's property to scare them; abuse also refers to children that witness partner violence (Domestic Violence Act, 1995, s.4 & 19; Ministry of Justice, 2007).

The statute aims to abolish power and control in domestic relationships and to eliminate violence and abuse. By clearly outlining the types of inappropriate behaviour, the Domestic Violence Act 1995 gives legal rights to those who are in violent domestic situations to be protected from physical, sexual and psychological abuse. The Domestic Violence Act 1995 gives power to the Courts to protect the victim(s) against the abuser using the trespassing order. Initially a temporary protection order is enforced for three months after a complaint is made. If the respondent does not challenge the order through the Court, or if the applicant does not withdraw the complaint during this time, the order becomes permanent (Ministry of Justice, 2009). The Act also ensures that there are appropriate programmes such as counselling from NGO's to assist the victims affected by domestic violence (Department of Corrections, n.d). The Act is in place because standards need to be set for the safety and protection of individuals. It is an important Act in Aotearoa New Zealand especially with the high rates of domestic violence occurring, which has a direct impact on parenting and contact orders (Perz, 2001).

Implications: Perz (2001) discusses the abusive nature of some fathers, either physically or emotionally. In many homes, fathers are experienced as over-critical and demanding by their families. The abusive nature of men has been well documented in research (Nelson, 2013). A study by Nelson (2013), observed men are parenting through the eyes of children when parenting arrangements were made by the Family Courts (2013). Nelson (2013) was trying to identify the influence of paternal presence on child(ren) where violence against the mother has occurred, and if contact with the father is beneficial to the child(ren) or whether a model of parenting which supports limited, or no contact, would be more beneficial in some circumstances. The findings included that domestic violence impacts on the father's ability to be a good parent and role model to their children. Furthermore, that his children would be at risk with on-going conflict between parents, which would influence the children's choices with whom they would prefer to live with. Bancroft and Silverman (as cited in Nelson 2013) have observed that "there is a propensity by some batterers to be

neglectful and inconsistent in their care, showing little interest in the more mundane duties involved in parenting” (para. 15). In contrast, a longitudinal Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study, by Jefferies (2001) discussed the gender asymmetry in domestic violence and potential discrimination against males in Aotearoa New Zealand’s justice system. The study was co-supervised by renowned criminologist Newbold, who interestingly identifies men’s and women’s rates of domestic violence offending as very similar (Newbold, as cited in Jefferies, 2001), challenging the stereotype that male offenders are disproportionately higher in numbers than women, which would be based on males not reporting domestic violence against them.

Buckingham (2004) argues that Jefferies and Newbold’s interpretation is misleading insofar as it overlooks the fundamental issue of violence against women. Buckingham (2004) finds that men are four times more likely to be the perpetrators of domestic violence than women and asserts that the research Newbold promotes is a “selective interpretation of domestic violence offending and victimisation, and maintains that its promotion in the media is counter active to efforts to prevent violence against women” (p. 254). While this type of research is necessary, it reinforces the stereotype of violence in the home being predominantly done by men (Birks, 2001), drawing attention away from their rights and role as fathers. While the interpretation of the law which is enforced by police seems to favour women in general as the victim, men are more than likely to be removed from their homes irrespective if they are the victim or perpetrator (Buckingham, 2004). This has placed further resources on social services, for example, Police, CYFs and NGO service providers who engage with both parents in the hope to support the family.

### **The Human Rights Act 1993**

Purpose: The Human Rights Act (HRA) 1993 consolidates and amends the Race Relations Act 1971 and the Human Rights Commission Act 1977 and provides better protection of human rights in accordance with the United Nations

covenants. The HRA 1993 protects people in Aotearoa New Zealand from discrimination in several areas of life. Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly or less favourably than another person is in the same or similar circumstances. (Human Rights Commission, 2010). The United Nations Human Rights Committee defined 'discrimination' in the Covenant as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which is based on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status, and which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms (Human Rights Commission, 2008b). Discrimination can be either direct or indirect and freedom from discrimination is not just formally recognising the law, but ensuring that everyone could enjoy equal rights (Human Rights Commission, 2008).

*Implications:* The Human Rights Commission (2010) has played an integral part of submissions to address inequality and law changes in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as the Civil Union Act 2004, Human Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2004, and the Care of Children Act 2004. In addition, addressing inequalities against the GLBTIQ community by addressing same-sex couples will have the same rights as every other Aotearoa New Zealand. This will result in ongoing change to individuals, families, communities, towns, cities as well as influence the discourse on norms in other countries. However, there are still many Acts that restrict men from either being a father or creating a family which are being addressed and upheld by the Human Rights Commissioner (Rutherford, 2016).

### **Human Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2004**

*Purpose:* The Human Assisted Reproduction Technology Act 2004 is enforcing to regulate situations where there is human assisted reproduction, for example In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) or surrogacy.



Implications: In the Western world, the consensus view has long held that for a man to become a father he needs to impregnate a woman (Morrell & Richter, 2006). However, this thinking has been challenged more recently by the advent of scientific and medical breakthroughs such as IVF and artificial insemination which is now funded by the government (Fertility Associates, 2016). Men who have donated sperm have no legal rights and in many instances when a man's sperm fertilises an ovum, he is not perceived as the father (Morrell & Richter, 2006). It is perceived that sperm is less precious than eggs, making men feel inferior; the law around sperm donation varies, depending upon whether the mother carrying the child is married or has a partner. The husband/partner is determined as the father of the child and not the sperm donor. Whereas, single woman becoming mothers through sperm donation, the sperm donor has the right to either stay in contact with their child or not (New Zealand Law Commission, 2016). These facts change the concept of 'father', which traditionally and historically has been a status resulting from a biological process. "Anthropological literature is filled with examples where the providers of the sperm – the 'father' – are not considered important in the life of the ensuing child or the mother" (Morrell & Richter, 2006). Therefore, it can be suggested that fatherhood is associated with fathering, when a man is expected to take on the physical role of being a father and interacting with his children (Morrell & Richter, 2006).

Furthermore, men have no legal rights when a women choose to terminate the child they are carrying even though they may have developed an emotional connection to the unborn child. The rationale here is that the "mother only experiences the potential life threatening physical risks associated with pregnancy" (Dunedin Community Law, 2005). This can be viewed as biased as research has identified that men who find themselves in this predicament incur emotional stress and harm which can manifest itself in mental trauma, causing physical illness (Grief, 2010). In the United States of America, mental trauma caused by another party is an offence suable in a Court of Law (New York City Bar, 2015). In Aotearoa New Zealand, there is no such law that protects future fathers

from these emotional and mental stresses. Therefore, it seems prudent that men need further advocacy around their rights, when engaging with professionals and the legal system in the hope to create a family.

### **The Marriage Act 1955 & Marriage (Gender Clarification) Amendment Act 2013**

Purpose: The Marriage Act 1955 was drafted in the mid-1950 and at that time marriage according to common law and the Registrar was deemed that marriage can only take place between a man and a woman. In contrast, The Marriage Act 1955 did not specify that a man cannot marry a man nor did it say a woman cannot marry a woman (s.23(1)(2)(3)). However, it seemed to be the interpretation of the Courts at that time per the social norms of the day that Parliaments intentions were only to include same sex marriages (Hide, 2012). Sixty-three years on, and our current society's norms challenged these notions of what a marriage looks like. The Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013 amended the Marriage Act 1955, to include the definition of marriage which includes same-sex couples. In addition, these changes aimed to amend any other legislation that addresses same sex relation discrimination.

Implications: The Marriage Act 1955 changed to include same-sex marriage into law. Aotearoa New Zealand's social changes took effect when the Marriage Equality Bill was passed into law on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2013. The Marriage (Gender Clarification) Amendment Bill, which was introduced in 2005, sought to include a provision to the Marriage Act 1955 which would define that marriage means a union between a man and a woman. The Bill also aimed at amending the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 to include this definition with the intention of preventing this limitation being challenged as discriminatory.

Western Christian values have surfaced in recent debates on legislative reforms around the Marriage Amendment Act 2013. This Act enables couples to marry irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation. The new statutory definition of marriage in the Marriage Amendment Act 2013 defines marriage as "the union of

2 people, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity" (The Department of Internal Affairs, 2015). Despite the modernisation of the Marriage Act, the concept of marriage equality still challenges society's norms, which impact on custodial rights and beliefs. For example, the Adoption Act 1955 does not allow a male individual to adopt a female child. Furthermore, the dominant social discourse remains the Christian view of the role of the father as being a financial provider and taking on husband responsibilities and duties which includes taking care of his child(ren), predominately his sons, with the mother taking care of his daughters (Benzie, 2001; Locke, 2005; NewsHub, 2014; Perz, 2001), leaving single men with restricted choices when contacting CYFs to either adopt or foster a child.

### **Chapter summary**

Laws were enacted to provide order within our society, and they have become an integral part of our everyday lives. Law changes cause social change, and it is these changes where society struggles. Some of these laws include The Marriage Act 1955 and (Gender Clarification Amended Act 2013 and The Adoption Act 1955 which are challenging our society's views of what a family looks like, Aotearoa New Zealand is currently undergoing social changes at an incredible pace. Foremost, the changes to the Marriage Act 1955, which has changed how we view the roles of husband and wife. These changes will impact the Adoption Act 1955, and reviewing who is entitled to adopt a child(ren) irrespective of gender of the adoptive and adoptee. Then we have laws that dictate on what supports we are entitled too, namely, the Social Security Act 1964, and the legal obligations and contracting that go with them.

Furthermore, there are Acts that determine family safety and legality around children and their care when parents separate or find themselves in some form of altercation, namely, The Domestic Violence Act 1995, Family Proceedings Act 1980, Care of Children Act 2004 and the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989. Therefore, interpreting our laws is complex, and understanding how these laws can restrict and hinder the processes for men needs to be

challenged, as without challenge, there can be no change for men wanting to take on the role of sole father, and it was this thinking that defined the questions around what the circumstances were for the participants in becoming fathers. This included all aspects of the legal system, from the Family Court, adoption, sperm donation and surrogacy. The next chapter will discuss the methodology used in this study.

# **Chapter Four: Methodology**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. The research adopts a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews to explore the experiences of fathers' accessing social services to maintain their families. The interview process provides insight to future researchers seeking to understand the experiences of fathers' phenomenon and ways in which further supports are designed that are tailored to their needs alone.

The first section of this chapter outlines the ethics process that will be divided in two parts, namely, ethics process and ethical issues which include informed consent, risk of harm, confidentiality, anonymity and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) Code of Ethics. This is followed by the researcher's interest in the topic, from his personal experiences as a man of homosexual orientation, who has been both married and a sole father. The researcher's hands-on experiences throughout his initial military and subsequent social work career engaged with men taking on the role of sole fathers is outlined. This is followed by a description of the research methodology that is a qualitative approach. The research design was based on semi-structured interviews which were viewed as the best means for this study to gain rich and thick information. The rationale for data collection method, sample size, and criteria for inclusion in the study are outlined. The participant's recruitment and selection process is followed by the data analysis. As an interpretive approach to research, the researcher has included a reflective outline which includes the limitations of the research methods, which ends with a summary to this chapter.

## **Ethics**

The following section will be discussed in two parts, namely the ethical process and ethical issues:

## **Ethical process**

To maintain high standards of research practice, a researcher requires not only expertise and intelligence, but also honesty and integrity; these research virtues were applied throughout this study. Ethical research is essential to generate sound knowledge for practice (Burns & Grove, 2001). As this research involved human participants, approval from Massey Universities Human Ethic Committee (Appendix B) was obtained (Appendix J). Additionally, as a registered social worker, the researcher was guided by the ANZASW Code of Ethics (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, 2008) and the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) (2008) Code of Conduct, which provided a framework for ethical practice and research. Furthermore, the researcher received clinical, cultural, academic and professional supervision from professional external supervisors; these interactions provided multiple opportunities for reflection and enquiry across the key research dimensions.

## **Ethical issues**

This section will be discussed under the following headings, informed consent, risk of harm and anonymity and confidentiality:

*Informed consent:* Informed consent was obtained from each participant that covered and included confidentiality. Permission was sought and obtained from participants by means of written consent (Appendix D) and the purpose of the study was comprehensively explained (Appendix C). The consent forms were stored individually in the participant's research file and information that was electronically stored on computer or any other electronic device was password protected. Printed information was stored in an encoded safe and could be accessed only by the researcher. The researcher is complying with the request from the Massey University Ethics Committee for participant's personal information to be stored for twelve months after the examination of this thesis. No person except those actively involved in the analysis of the data had access to the data, namely me and my supervisors.

*Risk of harm:* Neuman (1997) asserts that research studies should only accept participants who volunteer free from coercion. Potential risks to the emotional, mental and physical safety of study participants were identified by advising the participants that what they feel during the interview could be harmful to them (Laimputtong, 2007). The researcher explained the nature, purpose, and significance of the study to each of the participants so that they were fully informed of the process (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2008). Furthermore, the researcher identified if there were any potential self-harms and risks to himself which were included in his Ethics application (Appendix B). During the interview process, only one participant requested that the recording stop, due to him tearing up and wanting to gain his composure. Once he did, the recording process continued. After the interview process, he was asked if he required any counselling and supports, which he declined. Counselling services were offered to all participants after the interview process. None of the participants took up this offer. Furthermore, any risks or self-harms were identified by both of his academic supervisors during supervision in minimising any risk to self and the University.

*Anonymity and Confidentiality:* As a researcher, I am aware that anonymity in a qualitative study cannot be guaranteed (Punch, 2006; Rubbin & Babbie, 2010). However, confidentiality can be guaranteed. Confidentiality is the management of private information shared by the participants (Banks, 2006; Beckett & Maynard, 2005; Punch, 2006), that establishes that their personal information will not be included in published research and that their privacy will be respected always. Confidentiality was discussed with all participants (Banks, 2006; Beckett & Maynard, 2005), and pseudonyms were used to protect their identity throughout this thesis. Five of the participants requested that the researcher use their names and expose their identity, as they wanted their narratives to be told, the researcher declined their requests. Participants were treated with respect and dignity, and their confidentiality was always upheld.

## **Researcher's interest**

The research topic was inspired by the stories of sole fathers while working in the military in South Africa, as well as the cultural and spiritual beliefs surrounding fatherhood. This was evidenced by the complications surrounding the birth of the researcher's daughter, as his wife contracted septicaemia, and the newborn was sent home in his care. The lack of social services and grants for all minority groups in post-apartheid South Africa become evident when the researcher tried to access supports (Haarmann, 2000).

Due to the political unrest and violence in South Africa in the 1980s', the researcher chose to resign his commission and immigrate to New Zealand, where the majority of his father's family resided. During this transitional phase, the researcher separated from his wife, took guardianship and day-to-day-care of his daughter and only recently accepted his sexuality and came out gay to the rest of his family and friends.

In 2008, the researcher chose to re-educate himself and found himself on the other side of requesting social service supports in New Zealand, and experienced that his child suffered institutional discrimination when accessing social services and in society generally. This viewpoint was reinforced when working as a registered social worker, and discovering how such unequal treatment was supported by legislation, religion, and social disposition, and described widely held negative assumptions and attitudes towards men and their gender identities. The study participants' stories also revealed the role social stigma played in influencing their decision either to engage with support services or to struggle on unassisted.

## **Methodology**

This study used a qualitative approach as a means of discovery (Fielding & Thomas, 2008), as it describes new situations of participant's narratives unique unto them (Burns & Grove, 1999). In addition, the use of an interpretive approach was utilised to assume that individuals create and connect to their own



experiences, either 'subjective or inter-subjective', as we connect with the world around us (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). This was determined to be the most appropriate and effective research approach for this study focusing on personal experiences (Johnson & Waterford, 2004; May, 2001; Punch, 2010; Rubin & Babbie, 2010). This research was conducted from a social constructivism paradigm (O'Leary, 2004; Rubin & Babbie, 2010), which emphasises the existence of multiple realities in the sense that everyone views the world through different lenses. The aim of constructivism is to investigate new ways of viewing social structures.

Blundor and Greene (2008) describe these social concepts of sociology and anthropology as a form of "social action that has consequences" (p. 243). These consequences are around the language of discourse analysis, which explores ways of how these constructions constrain and or enable fathers when trying to maintain and create their families. This thinking can be defined as a society's collective set of shared unconscious assumptions around social issues which impact individuals and communities (Reid, Greaves, & Poole, 2008).

## **Research design**

The method of semi-structured interviews used simultaneous compilation and analysis by which the application of the method of invariable comparative analysis would be in the creation of categories and theoretical memos by recording all analytical processes, including field notes as they occurred. This was to ensure that the study was rigorous and auditable (Hodkinson, 2008). This allowed the researcher to elaborate on concepts and themes identified during the interview process with the use of footnotes, as an aid to both objectifying and abstracting their relationships (Rubin & Babbie, 2010), as the findings would be idiosyncratic, rather than generalisable. It is hoped that this study will be of value and relevance to social workers by providing greater awareness of the struggles fathers may face when accessing social serviced to uphold, create and maintain families in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The format of semi-structured interviews was chosen as the best method to collect data as it provided both structure and flexibility. The interview schedule (Appendix E) provided a useful framework for a focused interview and systematic research process. The researcher used a collection of ten base questions (Appendix E) as a guide for the interview process (May, 2001), to allow participants to tell their narratives (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). It was important to construct questions carefully to obtain the kind of data required in answering the research question, including asking additional interview questions that identified any variables as part of the inductive approach, such as the use of footnotes when fathers described their experiences of assessing social services when maintaining and creating families (Punch, 2006).

### **Data collection**

The research sample comprised of eight men who became sole fathers through separation, death of a partner, whnau agreement, adoption, surrogacy or by order of the Family Court, and who had applied for social service supports, either statutory or non-government. This research used a qualitative approach of data collection and analysis (Punch, 2006), which invited participants to disclose their demographic information during the initial meeting in order to evaluate literature and findings from New Zealand Statistics. In addition, to recount participants' subjective perception of their experiences (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). Face to face interviewing offered participants the ability to talk freely and openly about their experiences and provided flexibility within the question sequence and answer process (Johnson & Waterford, 2004; Punch, 2010).

Interviews were audio recorded and these were transcribed verbatim by the researcher with the omission of untangle words and filler linguistics words (Fielding & Thomas, 2008). Semi structured interviews were used to ask questions that were descriptive and analytical (Saks & Allsop, 2007). The researcher used a collection of basic questions (May, 2001) which allowed participants to elaborate and clarify any answers or statements provided to obtain a greater depth of information, with special emphasis on their personal

experiences (May, 2001). The interview schedule (Appendix E) comprised both open and closed-ended questions. Adequate space was provided for the researcher to note significant responses and key words to answering the questions. Participant questions (Punch, 2006) included, such as:

1. Have you faced any social stigma when parenting your children?
2. What have you found to be positive about being a sole father?

The interviews commenced with introductions as outlined in the Interview Schedule, a discussion about the research question, and a review of the participant's consent form (Appendix D). The researcher then introduced himself, and was prompted by his first participants to disclose his accent, which led to divulging his culture and language, which was then included as part of the introduction process with the remaining participants. This allowed the researcher when necessary explained that he was aware of bi-cultural practice incorporating tikanga and kawa and that he would be following the appropriate protocols. Finally, the researcher invited the participant to introduce themselves. The first questions explored how the participants had become single fathers, their perceptions of these experiences, and their thoughts and feelings of these experiences.

The subsequent questions focused on their experiences when accessing social services, which offered participants an opportunity to provide rich information on the phenomenon; this led into the next question on their perceptions of the phenomenon. This line of questioning allowed participants to voice their subjective perceptions of their experiences when accessing social services, and for the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge of their experiences.

### **Participant recruitment and selection**

The researcher initially identified three potential male parenting groups, and from these groups two were approached via their WebPages with a letter of invitation (Appendix G) for their members to become research participants. The administrators of both groups accepted the invitation and posted

Advertisement/Script (Appendix H) on their respective WebPages. Potential participants were directed to contact the researcher directly to arrange a meeting.

The researcher identified during the selection phase that many of the fathers who had responded did not meet the research criteria, being single sole fathers with dependent children in their full-time care, which had accessed any form of social services. These potential participants were thanked for taking the time to engage with the researcher and some were directed to contact other support agencies after listening to their narratives. Participants who met the requirements were emailed the Information Sheet (Appendix C) and Consent Form (Appendix D), and were encouraged to contact the researcher if they had any questions. Participants were then asked to return their completed Consent Forms (Appendix D) either by post or scanned and emailed to the researcher, and an interview appointment was arranged.

Neuman (1997) describes contextual design as a focus on the context of a study in relation to a specific time frame, geographical area or specific phenomenon. Due to the geographical distribution of the participants, seven interviews were face to face in their homes and one took place by video conferencing through Skype. This enabled the researcher to record the interviews directly through Skype as backups to his field notes. Interviews were also recorded by Dictaphone just in case of equipment failure. The field notes were used to record key points raised by participants about their experiences, allowing the researcher to identify any themes that were developing. These themes offered insight when interviewing other participants about their experiences (Simmons, 2008). After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed by the researcher.

## **Data analysis**

Interview transcripts were forwarded to participants for them to edit before they were asked to approve the transcription. The Authority for the Release of Transcripts form (Appendix F) was presented to the participants once they had

reviewed the actioned changes that had been requested by the participants (Mays & Pope as cited in Johnson & Waterfield, 2004; O’Leary, 2004). This research is qualitative, and a thematic analysis approach was best suited to identify, analyse and report patterns to organise and describe the data and to interpret the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This was achieved by identifying patterns throughout the transcriptions which took place by research analysis. This was performed by the researcher who identified commonalities between each of the participant’s comments (Punch, 2006), by potentially identifying evolving repetitive patterns and themes which were analysed by the researcher through coding. This was achieved by creating a chart that converted responses to numbers to help organise and analyse the amount of data that is collected during a qualitative research, by developing an index in identifying key themes (Fielding, 2008). This allowed for the abstracting of the participant’s relationships (Braun, & Clarke, 2006; Rubin & Babbie, 2010), of the obtained themes to guarantee the utmost directional input, and in doing so, to optimise the outcome of this study by allowing the researcher to get a greater understanding of the meanings of the participant’s interactions, their situations and contexts of how they live when accessing social services.

### **Reflection on the research process**

In keeping with the interpretive approach of research, the researcher will now discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the recruitment and interviewing process.

The initial process of recruiting participants flowed well. The agencies were helpful and directed their members to me. However, due to snowballing, the advertisement was forwarded to other WebPages without my consent which initiated discussion boards on the research topic. The researcher viewed this unintended action as a positive because it provided an opportunity for conversation on the messages board about the issues relevant to sole fathers accessing social services while caring for their child(ren). The consensus from the

fathering groups was that while the research topic was current, the sample size was too small and that there was insufficient structure and substance for a social work research project.

These observations prompted further discussion with my supervisors who encouraged me not to be disheartened as the lay public does not understand the process of social research. My supervisors also noted that the study had been approved by the Massey University's Ethics Committee which verifies the research is properly designed. Four of my participants notified me that they would be withdrawing from my research, which was a further unexpected consequence of the advertisement, that another organisation initiated their own research relating to my topic, causing many of the research participants from that agency not to partake in my recruitment process and potentially exposing their research participants to harm as their study was not subject to any ethics control. The risk to participants of that study included re-living highly emotive events in their lives away from a carefully managed and monitored process, the absence of which could result in harm to their wellbeing and to their families (Bulmer, 2008).

Many of the participants who contacted the researcher did not meet the selection criteria that appeared in the advertisement (Appendix H). The researcher believed that many participants wanted to tell their stories about seeking professional supports for themselves and their families. This highlighted both the relevance of the research question and that not many participants were aware of what agencies were offering emotional support to fathers in need. Due to the number of respondents not satisfying the research criteria and the withdrawal of participants from one agency, there were delays in completing the recruitment process. The researcher proceeded to the third recruitment option which was to contact the final agency, whereby further participants were recruited.

Interviewing participants was challenging due to logistics and the need to work around their private and working lives. Interviews were mainly carried out in the

evenings. The researcher felt that while external factors placed many participants under pressure to conclude the interviews hastily, having only a limited amount of time focused the participants who provided structured and precise responses. Interviews were carried out in quick succession, which was viewed as another positive because it enabled the researcher to easily identify and explore themes relating to the research question that emerged in earlier interviews. The research was placed on hold for a few months due to the death of the researcher's father. Shortly afterwards, one of the research participants died in a vehicle accident. The break allowed the researcher time to reflect on the recruitment process and contacted alternative agencies to find participants who would offer a different perspective to the research question, namely, sole fathers who identified as Māori, American and Thai.

Interviews recommenced after three months, with one of the eight interviews taking place over Skype. The researcher found this process quite impersonal as the researcher was unable to observe a participant's full body language relating to the questions. For example, it was challenging to see when they felt uncomfortable or agitated; if the researcher could see and read all their body language this would have provided insight into their emotional response to a question and I could have explored this with them. Many of the participants had a need to unload and answered out of sequence and without prompting. This added complexity to the interviewing process as the researcher had to ensure that the participant answered all the questions without interrupting the flow of their narrative whilst also preventing them from providing information outside the scope of the research question. Despite the challenges presented by participants who disclosed in this way, the additional information they presented afforded the researcher further understanding and clarity into the phenomenon of what restricts or hinders sole fathers from accepting or accessing social supports when caring for their family.

## **Chapter summary**

Qualitative analysis, descriptive, exploratory, and contextual research design were chosen and semi-structured interview schedules were used to collect data. The researcher upheld ethical principles by obtaining permission to conducting the study, through the granting of informed consent by participants, by observing the confidentiality of participants, and principally by respecting their privacy. The researcher used a set of basic questions and allowed participants to elaborate and clarify any answers or statements made so that a greater depth of information, with special emphasis on a participant's personal experiences, was obtained and then analysed. Chapter five presents the results from the research participants.



## **Chapter Five: Results**

### **An introduction to the participants**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. This chapter presents the results from the research participants. One of the reasons for this research was to identify what changes need to take place for men in general when accessing supports, and how social workers can apply this knowledge when supporting and advocating for fathers who are experiencing intuitional barriers to accessing social services.

The research undertook an exploratory and descriptive study to identify the experiences encountered by sole fathers accessing supports in Aotearoa New Zealand. The findings are discussed according to the sections of the structured interview schedules as follows: structures of the family, supports accessed, father's interactions, perceptions and emotions when accessing social supports:

#### **Structure of the family**

Table 5.1 below, is an introduction to the eight fathers who participated in the study. Each father was assigned a pseudonym to protect his identity. The structure of the family is described by participant's ethnicity, sexuality, the age they became sole fathers, their current age, relationship status, initial number of children and their gender in their care, and current number of children and gender in their care, mother's involvement with their children, the types of supports accessed, either statutory or non-government and the gender of their social worker they engaged with.

Participants Pseudonym	Ethnicity	Custodial Fathers Sexual orientation	The age of fathers when they become sole fathers and their current ages		Current Relationship Status	Number of Children in care when applying for supports		Children still currently in father's care		Mothers Involvement with Children	Type of Supports Accessed Statutory & NGO		Social Worker Accessed by gender	
			Engaged	Current		Male	Female	Male	Female		Statutory	NGO	Male	Female
<b>Adam</b>	American	Straight	38	41	Single	2	1	2	1	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Barry</b>	Thai	Straight	52	57	Relationship	4	6	3	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Craig</b>	NZ Euro	Straight	61	63	Single	1	0	1	0	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Don</b>	Euro	Straight	43	47	Dating	1	1	1	1	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Ewen</b>	NZ Euro	Bisexual	41	52	Single	0	1	0	1	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Frank</b>	Euro	Gay	27	51	Relationship	0	2	0	0	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Gary</b>	NZ Euro	Gay	41	49	Single	2	0	0	0	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Harry</b>	Māori	Gay	33	48	Single	2	0	2	0	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Table 5.1: Participants information

*The participant's age distribution and sexuality:* The participants' current ages were between 41 and 63 years old. During the initial application for social service supports their ages ranged from 27 to 61 years. Only one participant, Ewen, identified as bisexual. Four straight participants were between the age of 38 and 61 years old. Three participants were between the age of 27 and 41 years old and identified as gay.

*Participant's ethnicity:* Of the eight participants four were Pakeha; Pakeha refers to white males either born in Aotearoa New Zealand or holding Aotearoa New Zealand Citizenship. Three were European born in Europe and now residing in Aotearoa New Zealand with Permanent Residence. Harry was Māori, Adam was American, and Barry was of Thai decent.

*Participant's home language:* All eight participants could speak English fluently. However, when it came to what languages were spoken in their homes with their children, four spoke English. The rest were bilingual, and English was identified as their second language; namely, Harry spoke Te Reo, Craig spoke German, Barry spoke Thai and Gary spoke Dutch: "When having some friends over it's quite funny looking at their reaction when I'm interacting with my children in my language. One of my friends commented that he just presumed everyone spoke English." This identified the diverse cultures living within Aotearoa New Zealand, and the importance of understanding cultural diversity.

*Participant's marital status:* Out of the eight participants, Barry and Frank were in a committed relationship. Four were previously married to the opposite sex. Three left their partners/wives due to changing their sexual orientation to gay or bisexual, and Don was a widower. He commented: "having those last few months with my wife was very precious. It allowed us to discuss what we both wanted for our children and we even discussed me finding a wife, really strange times."

*Participant's religious denomination:* Half of the participants referred to themselves as Christian. All the gay men identified themselves as Christian, and

Gary identified himself as Roman Catholic: “You know what’s really funny is that I go to church and they don’t know I’m gay. I’m a Christian and it shouldn’t matter”. However, out of the Christian gay men, only Frank disclosed his sexual orientation with his congregation: “I can’t give a fuck what the church thinks about me being gay; I’m so over this bullshit of trying to be someone else”. Gary, Harry and Ewan felt it would jeopardise their standing within their congregation and chose not to disclose their sexual orientation. Ewen stated: “I go to church for my children, and it’s important to me that they go and I don’t want to jeopardise their faith”. Don identified himself as Hindu <sup>4</sup> under the subset of Sikhism, even though he disclosed that none of his friends knew his religious and faith status. Adam referred to himself as Jedi. Adam, Gary and Barry chose not to disclose their religion; however, Gary did not want to be classified as atheist and when trying to clarify this, he declined to comment.

*Participant’s number of children:* Three children were neither biological nor related to their fathers. Craig’s son Peter (non-biological) and Peter’s mother boarded with Craig until she started getting into trouble with the Police and disappeared for weeks on end leaving Peter in Craig’s care without even asking him first, which started to become a habit:

I just knew that I had to do something for Peter and give him a better life than the one he was having. So, I applied to the Family Court for custody. You know that was the hardest thing I’ve done. I’m 63 and taking on a child that I learned to care for when he lived with me and everyone says I’m mad. My son thinks it’s the wrong thing and worries what people are saying.

---

<sup>4</sup> In Hinduism, homosexuality is regarded as one of the possible expressions of human desire and found in mystic’s stories portraying same-sex experience as natural and joyful. Das Wilhelm (2008) undertook a comprehensive study into the Vedic concept of the third sex that defines homosexuality, transgender identity and intersexed (transsexuals) behaviourism as a third category of nature apart from ordinary heterosexual contact. The various types of third-gender people are described along with their social roles in Vedic society and accompanied with Sanskrit references and terminology (Das Wilhelm, 2008).

The rest of the children were biologically related to their fathers. Don's children were created with the support of In Vitro fertilisation <sup>5</sup> (IVF). Table 5.1, outlines the gender of the children in care to father's sexuality. The bisexual father Ewen had one daughter and was the sperm donor of three other children not in his care. The gay fathers Frank, Gary and Harry had three daughters and three sons between them, and Harry had donated sperm and was not sure of how many children he had fathered. While the straight fathers Adam, Barry, Craig had seven daughters and nine sons in their care, which does not include their other children living with other partners.

*Persons living with the children:* Table 5.1 identifies that four mothers are not involved with their child(ren) on a regular basis. Don stated that he has a few mothers as friends who suggested that the fathers of their children do not interact with them. Don was quite adamant that at times it is not about the father not wanting to engage with his children but the mother that restricts this from happen due to selfish reasons.

Don stated that the mother of his children kept on promising his children things and failed to deliver. Her actions were a regular source of disappointment to the children and he maintained that he was regularly dealing with the aftermath:

So I don't tell my kids anymore about when mum is coming or promising to take them out until it actually happens. The saddest thing is that I'm telling lies to my kids and I believe they think I'm keeping their mum away from them.

This was identified around mothers that only engaged with their children monthly or not at all. The remaining four mothers visited their children once a week as arranged through the Family Courts and were on going while this research took place. Out of the 23 children, only 16 of them are still living with their fathers, and three are no longer reliant on their father's financial support or care. Barry

---

<sup>5</sup> IVF involves the fertilisation of an egg/s outside of the human body by using the couples' own egg/s and sperm, or using donated sperm or egg/s, or both to create a child (IVFAustralia, 2015).

and Frank both have a partner or spouse; Don is the only one dating. The remaining fathers are not involved in any relationship at all, and Adam informed: "I've tried dating, but it gets really complex when she has children as well and my children don't get on. I'm not just dating a woman; I'm dating her children as well!"

Participant's accommodation: Only Adam owned his own home, six rented, and Frank lived with his parents. It was identified that participants that lived in the Canterbury region had moved to more homes than other participants during the time they have been caring for their child(ren). This seemed to be related to the Canterbury Earthquakes and the displacement of their families. One participant still resides with his parents five years after the Canterbury earthquakes due to the financial stresses of waiting for repairs:

The positive is that they have help me raise my children and I love them for that. But what's sad is that I'm still waiting for our home to be fixed so we can all move forward. We had so many things we wanted to do together and Sonja has left my parents place and for Uni, it saddens me that she missed out on having her own space [Frank].

Participants' employment: During the initial time of becoming custodial fathers six participants were employed. Harry was receiving the Job Seekers Benefit and Craig was on the health and disability related benefit. He stated: "The worst thing is that when anyone hears that I'm on the benefit they all presume I'm a low life. Ye, life's hard on a benefit and no one wants to be it on really". Within the first year of becoming custodial parents four of the six fathers stayed in employment. Frank and Barry tried to get support from WINZ within a year of becoming custodial fathers, and applied for the Unemployment Benefit/Job Seekers or Studylink. This increased the participant beneficiaries from two to four applicants, Adam disclosed: "It's great knowing that in case of emergency there is WINZ that can help out. The sad thing is that I don't know that I'm entitled to, and they didn't say either."

Participants' ex-spouse employment status: Out of the participants only three were claiming child support from their spouse through Inland Revenue (IRD). Don was not able to claim any form of child support due to the death of his spouse. Five of the spouses were claiming the Unemployment Benefit within the first year of the participants taking sole care of their children. Only one was in paid employment and the mother of Craig's child was incarcerated:

What a bloody nightmare this is. I don't even want to communicate with her. So, I buy things for [son] and say they are from his mother. She owes me thousands, and I know I'll never see it so why even try?

Frank was totally frustrated when he applied for child support as suggested that his partner at the time made his life unbearable:

I had everyone and my boss taking money to pay her. I know this money was not going to my children as I was still buying them things and she was telling everyone that I wasn't paying. But when I got my children I couldn't get a bloody cent from her and no one was helping me.

Participants' family source of income: Six fathers were employed, Craig was a beneficiary, and Barry was engaged with Studylink. All fathers received Working for Family Tax credits; five were receiving Child Support payments. Frank was self-employed and had to phone into WINZ on a regular basis to report his income: "Jesus Christ, what a bloody nightmare this is. I have to call WINZ every week to tell them how much money I've earned so they can reduce or increase what I get from them." Frank disclosed that anything he receives under a \$100 he can put in his pocket and anything over that he must declare to WINZ who takes 30 cents off every \$1 earned and 70 cents off anything over \$200. The downside to this is that if their Jobseeker Support benefit payment is reduced by the same amount that they receive on the benefit they will receive no support and their supplementary benefits may also be affected. This has led to a few of the

participants being over paid which they must repay reducing their weekly income (Work and Income, 2016):

I don't know how many times they've [WINZ] fucked up as I did call it in. I do have to say that I've had some real awesome people sorting it out for me too. It's not always about the negative [Frank].

Recently WINZ has introduced My MSD online Webpage, which allows beneficiaries to have direct linking to their information by logging in their income and arranging appointments and requesting additional financial supports (Ministry of Social Development, 2017).

*Participants level of training or education:* Harry and Gary held a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Frank held a Diploma while Adam and Ewen held a certificate in a trade, one NCEA level 1 and two NCEA levels 2. The remaining three held school certificates. Interestingly, the gay participants held higher qualifications than their heterosexual counterparts. However, Don held the lowest qualification and owned his own business which did not allow him to apply for supports through WINZ, due to his overall yearly income being over the threshold. Frank who owned his own business found this difficult as times when he did not receive any income for a week due to his creditors not paying him. This led to him not having money and needed supports which he did not qualify for from WINZ: "There's nothing worse than not having money for your kids, they don't understand." Frank suggested that WINZ should look at this policy on a weekly basis as the needs should be viewed as here and now and not looked at per his yearly income: "So I had to tuck my tail between my legs and go to the food banks to help me out. I've never told anyone that before."

*Custody and care of their children:* Three fathers chose to take on their children which occurred either through separation agreements through the Courts or Whānau agreements. Harry's neighbour had a little boy, and the mother kept on requesting that he and his partner at the time take care of him while she went



out. It was later identified that she was whānau and Harry sat down with her and suggested that they take care of her son, so that she can sort out her life. This started going well, however over time, the mother's drug habits got worse and she was neglecting her son. Harry decided that it would be best if they proceed with the Whānau Agreement, and the mother agreed for this process to take place. They both agreed that they would never do this again, as it was an expensive and educating role of working with the Court system and CYFs. A couple of years later, the same mother got pregnant again, and CYFs asked if they would take care of this child. Both Harry and his partner had just separated and thought that it would not be good for them to take on another child. This time CYFs offered supports, payment for court costs and offered to provide them financial supports to set it up:

However, we talked to our son who was 8 at the time and he wanted his brother to live with him, so my ex-partner and I agreed to parent this precious child. This has not been easy as we both have legal guardianship of the children but we don't live together. I have to say that CYFs were great sorting this out for us, as the previous time we did it ourselves and was a nightmare and very expensive to get sorted.

Don became a sole parent through the death of his spouse. Four of the participant's chose to take their children into their own care due to believing that they would be better off with them than their mother. During this research, Craig and Frank were still applying through the Family Court for another one of their children to be placed in their care, which were either living with their mother or in CYFs care. Don and Harry are currently engaged with the Family Court trying to gain day-to-day care and custody of a child each, Don expressed how he felt: "Am I allowed to swear as it's the only way to express how frustrated I get? Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!"

Both Don and Harry are struggling with this process as they must prove that they are fit and proper due to allegations made about them from their partners/spouses:

You know, I've got mates that are worse off than me, the child's mothers have accused them of crap which is lies and now they can't get their kids. Why do I have to prove I'm good dad when these kid's mothers get pissed use drugs and can still keep their children, it makes no sense man. [Don].

### **Summary**

The introduction to the participants identifies the diverse cultures and beliefs that reside within the community, and the emotional contents and contexts that these fathers have experienced when pulling all their resources together to take care of their children. Participants were generally mature, educated and street-smart with extensive life experiences, which were underpinned by cultural values and beliefs. All fathers believed in traditional parenting and relationship social norms, and tried to emulate these roles as they did not have anything else to compare with. Frustration with service providers and the system they worked under was a common thread among the participants. A determination to work in the best interests of their families was a common driving factor. The next section identifies the different social services that the participants accessed and their interactions with these service providers.

### **Father's interactions with social services**

This section will be divided into three parts, firstly, the reasons why the fathers engaged and disengaged with social services, followed by the services they accessed and their experiences, in addition, how fathers perceived those services. This information was obtained by asking an axillary research question around the social stigma participants experienced which expanded to include the following headings, namely, society's norms, legislation, and religion:

#### **Reason fathers accessed social services**

The situations for fathers to access supports has been varied according to their needs, being either mandated to engage by legislation or directed by family, case

managers and social workers. Fathers did not view their personal needs first, as they were based on the needs and interaction with their child(ren).

### **Reason fathers terminated social services**

Most fathers engaged with social services due to being mandated to do so by CYFs or the interaction with Police. Fathers disengaged with services once they had completed their programs or felt the need was no longer required for supports for themselves or their child(ren). Father's disengagement with MSD, namely Work and Income and Studylink were either due to fathers finding full time employment or stopped studying. In addition, there were fathers that chose not to engage with WINZ or stay long-term, as they did not want the stigma of being called a beneficiary. Don commented: "It's not good staying on a benefit for long as when you want a job it doesn't look good". Don explained that this was due to how prospective employers viewed men differently to women on the benefit when looking for work.

### **Social service fathers accessed**

Table 5.2, below list the type of social services accessed by participants which were rated according to fathers experiences they received by those agencies or support services. This will be discussed in two parts, namely rating of accessed social services and the types of supports accessed and father's experiences:

#### **Rating of accessed social services**

During the interview process, the participants discussed the type of social services accessed. These services were grouped together according to the similar type of service provided, namely, families, Work and Income, Child, Youth and Family, Correction Services, Studylink, schools, police and legal systems, Christian agencies, non-government agencies, parenting and counselling services, food banks, churches, doctors and nurses. The researcher requested clarification around the types of services, and how they would rate them from excellent, good, acceptable, poor, very poor and no supports received at all. This was followed

by, if they would recommend the service to others. Table 5.2 shows participants thought statutory agencies are lacking in supplying supports and services compared to non-government agencies. The importance of family and peers as a support which was the most accessed or relied on is clearly demonstrated the importance of family as father's main support system.

Support Services	How many Fathers Applied	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very Poor	No Support	Would fathers recommend to others
Families	8	4	1	1	1	1	0	Yes
Work and Income	6	0	1	1	1	1	2	No
Child, Youth and Family	6	0	1	0	2	1	2	No
Correction Services	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	Yes
StudyLink	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	Yes
School	8	1	1	4	1	1	0	Yes
Police and Legal systems	8	0	0	3	2	1	2	No
Christian Agency	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	No
NGO	7	4	1	1	1	0	0	Yes
Family Support Agency	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	Yes
Parenting Agency and Counselling Services	4	1	1	2	0	0	0	Yes
Food Banks Support	5	0	4	1	0	0	0	Yes
Church	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	No
Doctor	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	No
Nurse	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	No

Table: 5.2. Supports and Rating of agencies by participants

## **Type of supports accessed and father's experiences**

This section will discuss the perceptions and interactions of fathers in relation to the services they accessed, namely, Family, Statutory Services and Non-Government Agencies (NGO). In addition, each heading will explore father's positives and negatives they experienced during this process of engagement, including how fathers felt they were treated by statutory and NGO agencies and how they processed those interactions:

### **Family**

Positives: All the participants felt they could not have taken on the role of a custodial father without the ongoing emotional, practical and financial supports of their families. Barry quoted: "Without family I don't know what I would have done. What's that saying 'can't live with them, can't live without them'". Don and Gary struggled as they had no direct family supports living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Gary noted: "Not having any relatives living here is such a struggle at times, I've thought many times to leave New Zealand and go back home, but it's the best place for me and my children". However, the parent's mother of Don's children seemed to be very supportive of him taking care of their grandchildren: "My relationship changed with Bella's mum when the police went around arresting her for assault. Now she comes over often and helps out and helps with the grandkids". Gary relied on his friends and his estranged partner for supports:

My wife and I are good mates and my lessie [lesbian] mates keep me grounded. Don't get me going about the gay community. As a guy with little ones trying to date is a no go, many don't want children and those that do are already taken. On the upside, my boys are dating and the house is filled with girls, so my family's growing.

Negatives: Family were most likely to report participants to authorities. This was either out of frustration or vindictiveness to either hurt the participant or change the perception of those they engaged with. Frank disclosed: "My ex kept on calling CYFs on me, and even my mum did when I wouldn't do what she wanted".

## Summary

This summary will be discussed in two parts, namely how fathers were treated and managed their engagement with family:

*Treatment of fathers by families:* Father's felt that they were forced to engage with statutory services, namely CYFs and WINZ, and felt frustrated that their family would even suggest the need for them to engage, as these services have negative connotations against them. Frank disclosed: "Why would you want to engage with a service [WINZ] that won't help in the first place".

*How fathers managed the process and interactions with family:* Fathers interactions with family, was complex and yet they felt more comfortable engaging or being directed to NGO services by family members. As Frank disclosed, it is about the stigma associated with the type of service they engage with and 'keeping face' while trying to keep their family together.

## Statutory services

Statutory social services are mostly administered by the MSD, District Health Boards (DHB) and the Ministry of Education. There are two prominent services, namely, CYFs with a mandate to offer care and protection to vulnerable children and young people. WINZ is the other that offers employment advice, income support and superannuation services; student allowances and loans through Studylink; and, social housing assessments, education and food subsidies to mention a few (MSD, 2016). The following statutory services were accessed by participants: WINZ, CYFs, Department of Corrections, Studylink, Schools, Police and the legal system, for example, Courts.

## Work and Income

*Positives:* Only Adam and Harry felt supported from WINZ, as they did not need any social work supports. Barry had a positive outcome when engaged with a social worker who applied for a review: "When my social worker went back to WINZ and challenged them she got the initial decision overturned", as to him normally being turned away. In addition, the

stand-down period can be overturned by the manager of WINZ if they receive the necessary documentation as to why and the circumstances surrounding their application. Barry reported: “I had an awesome social worker that helped me through this difficult time and he did not expect no for an answer”. However, two participants were not aware of this, and just left WINZ as they did not understand the application process.

Negatives: The rest of the participants felt that they were treated unfairly, and Craig quoted: “I don’t know if it’s just me, but I feel that they [WINZ] speak down on me instead of with me.” Many experienced degradation and felt belittled and worthless. Barry applied for the DPB which was denied as they did not believe that he was not living in a relationship:

The women were not helpful, she said I had to prove that I was not in a relationship even though my estranged wife was living in Thailand and my ten children were living with me. She wanted proof from the Court that we were separated and she [was] not planning to come to New Zealand.

Three fathers felt they were forced to look for work while taking care of their children under the age of five, compared to woman in the same situation, and Adam and Craig were forcibly removed from WINZ for raising their voice out of frustration. They believed they were not being able to have their voice heard as they were misunderstood.

When I start talking about this I get fucking angry mate! It’s all cool with the people in front eh, and when I get there she looks funny at me eh, just the way she talks to me eh. When I got a social worker, she didn’t do it again eh! [Adam].

Four of those six participants decided to go elsewhere for support as they could not be bothered with asking for government help as disclosed by Frank: “You must be joking, why the hell would want to put myself through that crap! I would prefer to die than stand in there [WINZ] and beg for money”. On further enquiring, this was due to social stigma associated with being on the benefit and stories that they had heard from others about ridicule and the lengthy stand-down process as noted by Don:



OK, so I had to leave my job as I couldn't get my shit sorted. When I applied for the benefit I was told that I had to wait 14 weeks as I resigned. She didn't want to listen to the circumstances.

### **Child, Youth and Family**

This section will be broken down into two parts. Firstly, those participants that accessed supports from CYFs, and then those that were approached by CYFs:

*Accessed supports from CYFs (negatives):* Craig was feeling disillusioned around the process of losing his child(ren):

When things were going tough I believed that CYFs would be the best place for me to get supports as it's their job to help me with my children. I was horrified to be informed that it's not their role to help me support my children as it was a court issue and that I needed to get help from a lawyer.

Furthermore, Harry and Craig requested supports from CYFs and found themselves on the receiving end of an investigation, after the CYFs social worker believed or assessed the father was not the acceptable or best caregiver, Craig noted that: "The CYFs social worker made me out to be a bad person. I've never felt so worthless, pissed off about false allegations. She made me feel as if I was the enemy for fuck sake".

*Approached by CYFs (Negatives):* Four of the fathers that gained custody over their children were contacted by CYFs, because CYFs received a notification either from family members, neighbours or schools. Of these anonymous notifications<sup>6</sup> the participants experienced them as malicious intrusions and not considered helpful. Barry highlighted the consensus around notification: "You get to learn this stuff quickly when social workers come knocking at your door saying you're a bad parent as they are getting notifications

---

<sup>6</sup>Notifications: Care and protection notifications are reports of concern from Education, Health, Police, Courts, social service providers, family members, and members of the public about the wellbeing for a child. A notification does not mean a child or young person will necessarily require CYFs statutory intervention (Child, Youth and Family, 2015).

and looking at taking my baby away.” Many participants felt that they were not understood, and that the social worker from CYFs had a different agenda to what a family looked like:

When I told her I was gay, she started asking me about who I am bringing home and where the kids go when my ‘friends’ come around, and do they see this [two men interacting sexually]. I got really snarly with her as I felt she was implying that gay men just have sex all the time in front of their children.

Craig was asked: “don’t you think you’re too old to take this on, and is it not better to put him in care until we sort a family member out?” Many participants felt that even though they took care of their children, CYFs were opposed to this option and asked if any other member of the family would be better at taking care of their child(ren). This only changed once the fathers proved that they were the best option for the care of their child(ren), and in doing so had to work hard to change the view of the social worker allocated to their case. Only once the father’s positive role was established, by means of attending anger management and parenting classes did the outcome change providing the participants with positive supports and referrals.

Don had his child removed from his care by CYFs without them offering support, counselling, legal advice or whānau support. He challenged: “If I was bloody woman they wouldn’t be doing this stuff they’d be giving me stuff to help me out.” In addition, Don felt the system escalated his drug and alcohol abuse: “You know if they had offered me stuff I would have taken it as I love my boy.” Don felt if he had engaged with a non-government agency earlier, he would have received supports for his drug and alcohol abuse in the form of counselling and in-home supports, which could have prevented CYFs taking his child away.

I know that I messed up. If CYFs had put supports in place for me like my social worker did I would have a different story. Having your child taken off you is the hardest thing to go through [Don].

Don is currently challenging the system within the Family Courts since he has suggested that: “I’ve cleaned up my act”, and feels he is still the best person to take care of his child(ren).

Positives: Ewen had a positive response to CYFs. However, on further clarification this was due to the mother of the child already being in the system, and her previous children taken away from her care. However, Don was not impressed with how many times he had to notify CYFs before his child was removed from her care. On a positive note:

For the first time, I felt supported from CYFs as they could verify that all her [mother] allegations and reports were about me were crap. It still bothers me that they [CYFs social worker] chose not to believe me from day one.

Craig was approached by CYFs after the Judge wanted a Family Group Conference (FGC) to determine any care and protection issues:

Thank goodness, I had a social worker already involved and working with me when CYFs got involved. I can’t imagine a positive outcome if he did not provide early intervention programs and supports.

Craig believed that applying for day-to-day care for the child he had grown to love was the best thing for the child, as the child’s biological father was not capable of taking care of him. Furthermore, the child’s direct family were supporting his application as they felt that Craig was the best person to care for their family member. Craig struggled with the question from the CYFs social worker around his sexual activities in his home with women, and if he had a sexual relationship with the mother of the child while she rented a room in his home. Making him out that he had a hidden agenda: “Just because I’m not his dad, they have an issue with him calling me dad.” Craig was questioned continuously about grooming<sup>7</sup>, and his connection with the child which was viewed as unnatural, until he

---

<sup>7</sup>Grooming is viewed as an individual who builds an emotional relationship for the purposes of sexual acts and exploitation of a child (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2015, para. 1).

engaged with legal supports, and the non-government social worker challenged CYFs in the FGC:

It was amazing to see him [Social worker] asking the social workers and other professionals in the room how did they see a family or determine what a family looked like. This changed many of their perceptions in the room. This was further evidence in a report he wrote informing the Family Court around the definition of what a family looks like, and the biases the CYFs Social worker had towards me.

After a lengthy legal battle, Craig is now the legal guardian over his child who calls him dad: "I've spent thousands of my own money to make this happen, and I'm not sorry, I would do it again!"

### **Department of Corrections**

Positives: Don was on correctional probation and felt he was supported adequately by his case manager. On further examination, it was identified that the case manager was following the Courts orders in respect to counselling, engaging supports for anger management, and adhering to the Courts' ruling regarding the community work requirements. It was also noted that his case manager offered him additional supports by allowing him to vent even though they were not a counsellor.

Negatives: Having to disclose or report that you are on correctional probation, left Don feeling degraded and belittled when engaging with social services.

### **Studylink**

Positives: Barry engaged with Studylink. He reported that he received positive supports during his time and had easy access to emergency grants and additional supports. Before Barry completed his tertiary course, he was advised to contact WINZ as his study was coming to an end:

I contacted WINZ and they said I had to apply online and had to wait for a seminar and a couple of weeks before I could get help, she was talking about a stand down

period. I was so confused and the more I asked why the more I could hear she was getting angry with my constant question about it.

Barry further contacted Studylink, and they advised him that they could arrange other financial supports, and encouraged him to contact WINZ, and advised him of his entitlements. Barry was happy with this service and was dreading going back to WINZ. The four-week stand-down period was challenged by the social worker and with the support of the site manager from WINZ, who wavered the stand-down period, payment commenced the same week as his Studylink payment finished. However, he withdrew his WINZ application after being employed within two weeks after completing his trade certificate.

Negatives: Barry felt the online application was complex and confusing and would have preferred a one-on-one with Studylink.

### **Schools**

Positives: Adam engaged with a school program, the Oscar program, offering parenting tips for after-school care. Four of the participants were not aware of any programs offered through the schools, and three would have engaged with the program had they known. However, on further discussion, six of the participants were aware or had heard of the Oscar program.

Negatives: Participant understanding was not clear on their entitlements as they believed it was linked to those who only had a Community Service Card, were beneficiaries or earned below the income threshold.

### **Police and the Legal system**

All the participants engaged in some form with the legal system, the Family Courts, Lawyers or police. Most the participant's engagement was around family violence and abuse around access and child care:

Positives: All participants acknowledged that the police are there to do a job, and they respect that.

Negatives: Half of the fathers were advised from CYFs that their concerns about the wellbeing of their child(ren) needed to be reported to police, and of those participants Adam received adequate advice or referrals. Gary, Ewen and Don had engaged with Police due to their teenage children either being in trouble or truant from school. Ewen reported: “How embarrassing when the police called me at work telling me that my daughter was not at school again and they were going to my home”. However, five of the fathers felt that the police did not understand or accept their narratives when they disclosed that they were the victim and their spouse/partner was the perpetrator. This was due to the commonly-held notion that men are more violent than woman, Craig disclosed:

The police came to my home many times due to my girlfriend screaming and throwing stuff and threatening to bash me up. When the police got here she started shouting and screaming that I had threatened and beat her. I was taken away a few times and trespassed from my home. This all changed one night when the neighbour called the police and told them I was the victim, man that was a good day.

According to the participants this seems to be a common theme for fathers trying to gain access to their child(ren), who were discredited by police and the Courts due to malicious statements reported by their spouses/partners. Adam disclosed he felt this was the only way for their spouses/partners to cause them harm, as these allegations directly disallowed them access to their child(ren):

It took me a long time to work out why she [partner] was informing the police about these lies. Yes, I had pushed her away a few times to protect myself. She was the one throwing stuff coming at with fists. She told the police that I had punched her and all this crap. I only later understood later that her allegations were recorded and this stopped me from seeing my child.

Harry and Barry acknowledged that there are men out there that are violent towards their spouses/partners, and these reports have indirectly caused them struggles in explaining or discrediting their spouse/partner behaviours and allegations. Don was raising his voice when he said: "Let the cops come with a lie-detector to sort out this shit" as he believed this would prove that he was the victim, which was echoed by Harry, Frank and Ewen. Five of the participants believed that the police would have resolved the issues; however, they were advised to contact a lawyer as it was out the scope of their responsibilities. Craig and Ewen had their child removed illegally by the child's mother. Ewen's daughter went away with her mother for the weekend. At the end of the weekend he went to collect her and was informed that they were not back from the coast. When Ewan asked what time they would be returning, no one could give him a definite answer. A day after, Ewen went to the police and they advised him that they could do nothing as it was a legal matter:

I'm fucking sure if I stole my daughter the cops would be arresting my ass, just because it's her mother they do nothing telling me it's a court issue. I even went to Chid, Youth and Family, and they said it was a police matter, man if my child's at risk they should act, so over these double standards.

## **Summary**

This summary will be discussed in two parts, namely how fathers were treated and managed their engagement with statutory agencies:

*How fathers were treated by statutory agencies:* Six fathers felt frustrated when they did not know where to go and what to do. These emotions were increased for those who engaged with WINZ and CYFs. "A bunch of wankers, they pretended to listen but they already have their own agendas". This frustration descended into anger with most participants as they felt their voices were not being heard when engaging with service providers, as they understand their emotional wellbeing. Four fathers felt disappointed that they would not be receiving supports immediately. Many were shocked to know of a stand-down period at WINZ, and could not understand this process, as it took them a long time to build up the courage to ask for supports initially, only to be let down that they were not immediate, which did not resolve their current issue: "I can understand what happened in Ashburton, we went there at our lowest needing help there to get told, sorry

mate we can't help you! Don't they understand that we go there when there's nowhere else to go?" Four fathers were depressed and two shocked as their wellbeing fluctuated throughout the time that they applied and received supports. During the interview process many participants identified the symptoms of depression and anxiety. However, only one participant found medical intervention. What was strange is that no professional who was engaged with the participants identified these markers and did a referral to the participants General Practitioner for a diagnoses and treatment.

*How fathers managed the process of accessing social services:* Five fathers felt scared due to the unknown of requesting support and the agencies reactions towards them. Many participants went to the same agency more than once before entering the premises. Most participants did not want to venture alone and took a support person or friend. This feeling subsided once they engaged. None of the fathers indicated that they were happy or proud due to the stigma associated with not fulfilling their responsibilities as men, such as being in full time employment. Five fathers indicated feeling guilty and having mixed feelings that were continuous throughout the application or meeting process with agencies and professionals alike. Furthermore, many participants felt they were not providing the full needs of their children which caused them more distress.

## **Non-Government Agencies (NGO)**

NGO's are mainly funded by the MSD and the private sector to provide a variety of services and humanitarian roles to improve the lives of marginalised individuals. The following agencies were visited by the participants: Christian agencies, NGO's, Family Support, Parenting and Counselling services, Foodbanks, Churches, Doctors and Nurses:

### **Christian Agencies**

*Positives:* Harry and Frank received supports in the form of food, a cup of tea and a chat from Christian Based Agencies, which was found acceptable by Harry.

*Negatives:* Both Harry and Frank felt they did not go out of their way to offer additional support with parenting or financial assistance which could have been outside the scope or



mandate of the agency. Six participants felt they would not engage with a Christian Based Agency due to the community they lived in being small and gossip was rife. Barry, Ewen and Gary disclosed:

I came from a small rural town. Everyone knew everything about everyone. So, you can imagine when I went into [Agency] and asked for help. The receptionist took all my details and made an appointment. It was not long before my mother called asking me if it was true that the police came around about me being violent. It just shows you how things get twisted as it was not me being violent. This never went away, everyone believed I smacked my partner, and she made out she was the victim [Gary, 2015].

### **Non-Government Agencies**

Positives: Seven of those registered with a Non-Government Agency offering similar services perceived the service to be exceptional in terms of implementing programs supports and advocacy.

Adam, Craig and Ewen had a male social worker who felt that they received the best services possible as he (social worker) could comprehend and understand how they felt emotionally and the physical struggles they were encountering. Ewen did a comparison between a female and male social worker:

I worked with my other social worker [Female] for six months and Jack came along and sorted out my shit within a few weeks and work with me to get things done I was struggling with. It was good to have a bloke that understood me.

Negatives: Craig found the service to be mediocre as the social worker agreed with CYFs reasoning to remove his child(ren) instead of trying to advocate for his rights:

I know she had a job to do, but she didn't like me and gunned for me eh. When I asked what she can do for me, she said nothing, and I need to sort my life out. Hell man I was asking her for help!

## **Family Support Agency**

Positives: Adam and Craig requested support from this type of agency that offered in-home supports. Both felt they received good support and encouragement with their parenting, budgeting, and counselling services.

Seven of the participants tried to outsource a male social worker in the belief that he would have a deeper understanding of their situation, the three who had a male social worker did a comparison between practitioners of different genders with the consensus being that you do get good and bad social workers:

When working with Jack it became clear that he had a deeper understanding about my needs. I'm not sure if it's because he was older and had a family. All I know is that he made things work. I know he pissed me off a few times too, but thinking back he was challenging me to change and I wasn't ready. Jack was tough but he made things happen which didn't when I worked with female social workers.

Negatives: Adam and Craig felt the service was lacking understanding of their needs, as explained to them: "this is the way it is done by all families".

## **Parenting Agency and counselling services**

Positives: Four participants engaged with parenting and counselling services. They all felt the services were exceptionally supportive, encouraging and helped them through difficult times. There were two frames of thoughts around parenting program. Fathers that currently had younger children compared to their counterparts whose children were educated in the 1990's and 2000's. Participants felt there was a larger selection of parenting programmes that were tailor-made made for them such as Positive Parenting Program<sup>8</sup> (Triple P).

Four participants were referred to counselling services by these agencies. Upon subsequent engagement with a social worker three were referred again to further

---

<sup>8</sup>Triple P offers supports to families, children and teenagers on how to manage issues that impact their everyday lives, including emotional, social and behavioural disorders (Triple P Centre, 2015).

counselling services. Of the three-receiving counselling, Harry and Adam said it was worthwhile or made some positive changes to their lives. Those participants that suggested counselling felt it was a worthwhile service; however, those that were also engaged with a social worker felt they received the same support and service from those professionals.

*Negatives:* Gary and Frank felt the social worker was condescending and biased against their gender and their parenting styles when engaged with parenting programs. When challenged by the participant, the responses were that: “all families are the same, or this program has worked for all families”.

Five of the participants felt that they were directed incorrectly by non-government agencies for counselling as a supposed one stop shop to resolve all their problems. Craig, Don and Gary identified that they were not ready for any form of counselling and felt that it was forced upon them to tick the boxes for additional supports.

### **Food Banks**

*Positives:* Five participants accessed this type of service. During the initial transitional time of their child(ren) coming under their father’s care, half of the participants engaged with this service on more than one occasion, Frank disclosed: “what a god send these food banks are”. They reported feeling supported and encouraged with the agencies going out of their way to direct them to additional services.

*Negatives:* Participants felt muddled somewhat when the agencies requested correspondence from WINZ stating that the participants were not entitled to any grants, and or that they had engaged with a budgeting service which restricted them from accessing food parcels.

### **Churches**

Don and Frank requested support from their Church with mixed emotions:

Positives: Both Don and Frank mentioned that the supports they were receiving were adequate until CYFs got involved.

Negatives: Don felt that this experience was soul destroying as his private life was aired and viewed by church members throughout their community:

There's nothing worse than airing your laundry in public, I couldn't go anywhere without everyone talking about my estranged wife and what she alleged I did to her, my kids were the most affected as they no longer were invited to play dates [Frank].

This led to the participant moving away from his community, district and home as he felt ostracised at that time. This was directly linked with a CYFs investigation that involved CYFs speaking with his minister and congregation members which fuelled unsavoury rumours among them.

### **Doctors**

Barry and Harry requested medical intervention or supports from their general practitioner:

Positives: Barry was treated for anxiety and depression which supported him coping and engaging with his child(ren).

Negatives: Barry requested additional supports for parenting, financial, worries, which he felt was not approached fairly and was denied referrals for these types of supports which were outside the scope of the doctor's role. Harry did not receive any medication or referral from his general practitioner, and later referred himself to a non-government agency.

### **Nurses**

Positives: Two participants felt that their nurse was supportive when engaging with their children, more to the point assisting them with their female child(ren).

Negatives: Ewen requested support from his Registered Nurse through his local Medical Practitioners office. He felt the nurse was uninformative, degrading, and was joking about his situation. He received responses like: “you'll get over it, gosh you men can exaggerate, we women have been doing this for a long time”. Three of the participants suggested that they would never approach their General Practitioner or Nurse for social supports as the township they lived in was small and they did not trust the grapevine.

## **Summary**

This summary will be discussed in two parts, namely how fathers were treated and managed their engagement with NGO's:

How fathers were treated by NGO's: Most referrals to NGO's came from CYFs to offer fathers supports or initiate programs, for example, anger management or parenting courses. Other services were provided by NGO's, for example counselling. The initial interactions felt forced, as the majority of fathers did not choose or ask for supports. Fathers that engaged with social workers found the term 'building relationships' fundamental to their on-going wellbeing. The overall perception from fathers was mixed, from those that felt services were ridged and non-conforming, to those that felt overtime that the services they offered were beneficial in their on-going growth as a parent and father.

How fathers managed the process: Fathers that had outsourced supports, found that having a social worker offered them insight and empowerment to confront agencies that were not forthcoming with their currently living predicament. Having a social worker changed their outcomes, with nearly all being 100% positive. Fathers that completed programs felt they had meaning, however, they did not resolve their issues which were time consuming and only relevant to conforming to CYFs or the legal system which they were willing to comply with to have their children in their on-going care.

## **Social stigma participants experienced**

This section will discuss the overall experienced around social stigma fathers have endured or believe exist for them as sole fathers, which will be discussed under the following headings, society's norms, legislation, and religion:

### **Societal norms**

This section will be discussed under the following headings: gender roles, paedophilia and grooming and violence:

*Gender roles:* All the fathers felt that society was not ready or forthcoming with men taking on the sole role as caregiver towards their children and that this attitude was reflected in the services they accessed for support in the role. Men are still viewed as the breadwinner and the head of the household. There is a difference between gay and straight men taking on the parenting role, as it seemed more acceptable for straight men looking after children than their gay counterparts.

*Paedophilia and Grooming:* Some parts of society still view men taking care of younger children as strange and not the norm. The perception that straight men seems to be more favourable in the role of taking care of boys than their gay counterparts. However, this was reversed for gay men taking care of girls, which was viewed as more acceptable. The gay participants addressed that grooming and paedophilia was always a topic when it comes to them having young boys. This was also echoed by the straight non-biological dad as he faced questions around grooming and the gay men around their sexual practices.

*Violence:* Fathers felt that the legal system was used against them, and they had no recourse in making amends to false allegations made by their partners or wives. Fathers were aware that they could come over as being aggressive or 'in your face'; however, the participants that were interviewed declared that they had never physically assaulted their partners or wives. On further discussion, the level of physical assault was misconstrued, as a slight push, a slap on the arm or raised voices was not viewed as violent or an assault against them.

You know when your child has done something wrong and you raise your voice or smack them on the hand not touch. I believe I did the same with my wife and she reported me for spousal abuse even though I was the one with nail marks across my back and arms. I wish had reported her but I wanted to keep face [Frank].

## **Legislation**

Father's experiences around legislation are broad and will be discussed under the following headings: equality, discrimination, accessing services:

*Equality:* The openly gay father's journey of acceptance and struggles of equality are still on-going, as both straight and gay men still experience discrimination around having children in their care or adopting a child.

*Discrimination:* There are Act's in New Zealand that are obsolete in this century around men creating families and still restrict men and their rights as human beings when it comes to being sperm donors and sole parents.

*Accessing services:* Fathers were not sure of their entitlements, and in addition, how they as fathers interpreted the law seemed to be different for woman when claiming supports around eligibility of having children in their care.

## **Religion**

Father's experiences differ from their interactions around their cultures and religious beliefs. This section will discuss this topic under the following heading, participants views on parenting roles and sexuality:

*Parenting roles:* Participants believe that religious roles of husband and wife are still 'alive and kicking' in our society. Adam stated: "religion is part of my life and in my church, I hear the preacher preach about the roles of husband and wife constantly which challenges my own perception of why am I choosing to parent alone".

Sexuality: The gay participants felt that religion dominated social acceptances around them having children. They also perceived that their personal beliefs were challenged by religious views and some still struggle with the balance between religion and sexuality.

## **Chapter summary**

This chapter introduced the participants in the study and the type of supports that are offered and that they engaged with as sole fathers in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, from the participants' perspectives it seems that there is a misalignment between what is offered and how these agencies/services can support men. The consensus was that participants felt misdirected and pressured into situations without having knowledge of entitlements or of how to address inequalities of service arising from their gender. Participants identified a difference in engagement between statutory and NGO's, namely the way they were treated better and respectful by NGO services and the type of supports that were offered. Participants noted that there was a lack of male social workers or case workers in front-line services. Themes of social stigma were identified around the gender roles fathers' chose, play and the different interpretations around sexuality, either being straight and gay had on their ability to parent or have families. This included the restrictions legislation has on men wanting to create or maintain a family Including how religion determined how our families are structured and the roles of fathers are expected to portray. 6. These findings will be discussed and compared with literature in Chapter 6



# Chapter Six: Discussion

## Introduction

In this chapter the findings from the participants will be discussed alongside the literature. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. This section will be divided into three parts to answer the four auxiliary questions, firstly, father's interactions with social services will be discussed under the following heading, namely, fathers engaged and disengaged with social services, services fathers accessed and their experiences, and how fathers perceived those services. This will be followed by social stigma participants experienced, which will be discussed under the following headings, namely, society's norms, legislation, and religion. Finally, one needs to identify how social workers can apply this knowledge when supporting and advocating for fathers accessing social services.

### **Father's interactions with social services**

This section will be divided into three parts, firstly, father's engagement and disengagement with social services, followed by the services they accessed and their experiences, and finally, how fathers perceived those services:

#### **Father's engagement and disengagement with social services**

This section will be discussed in two parts, namely, the social services they engaged and the availability and visibility of social services:

*Social services engaged:* There is minimal literature on sole fathers accessing social services. However, the literature on this topic is generalised around beneficiaries' experiences and how they were treated by their case managers. Most participants' first contact with a social service agency for supports was either through WINZ or CYFs. Both agencies are statutory agencies with their mandates prescribed by legislation. There were six government agencies that the participants engaged with, and the majority felt that they

were treated differently compared to women. Participants found it very difficult not to be in fulltime employment, as fathers believed this was viewed as a failure by society. Social conditioning around men being the head of the household and providing for their families does not change even when men became sole parents. There were fathers that could not cope financially and needed social service support, but chose not to apply, as they feared being labelled as not coping with parenting and risking losing custody of their children. This is totally aligned with literature that suggests that women are more complacent in receiving supports than men (Dale, 2013).

*Availability and visibility of social services:* Social services in Aotearoa New Zealand are vast, however, the services that they offer are not clearly visible or advertised (Khanlou, Haque, Sheehan, & Jones, 2014). The Citizen's Advice Bureau New Zealand (CABNZ) can help in finding supports, however, CABNZ needs to be made aware of the different types social services available and how to find them (Citizen's Advice Bureau New Zealand, 2016). Many fathers were not aware of what supports were available to them, and found themselves searching the worldwide web in the hope of finding information. Fathers therefore, found it difficult to ask for support as they were not aware of what is available. This was evidenced by fathers that engaged with WINZ around Third-Way ideology which stresses a hands-up and not a hands-out approach (Epsing-Andersen, 2007), as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. However, if one is not aware of one's entitlements, how can one put a hand-up in the hope of receiving the supports and entitlements that one is not aware of in the first instance?

## **Services fathers accessed and their experiences**

This section will be discussed in three parts, namely, engagement with statutory and non-government services, father's perception of social services and social stigma:

### **Engagement with statutory and non-government services**

This section will be discussed in five parts, namely, the social services they engaged, misrepresentation, engagement with WINZ, engagement with CYFs and society's acceptance:

Services engaged: Participants felt that there was a huge difference engaging with statutory and non-government agencies, and that service delivery should be looked at with statutory agencies to accommodate men and their needs. This was also echoed in the Nelson/Tasman (2000) report around men accessing social services, and the lack of understanding men received when engaging with these services (Chapman, 2000). This was around what individuals, their family, peers, and social services expected from men as sole parents, in terms of their parenting skills. There is a distinct difference between straight and gay men taking on the parenting role. In addition, this is due to a legacy of heteronormativity and legislation that previously discriminated against men creating families and what society perceived what a (heterosexual) family should look like, compared to same sex cohabitation (Šmídová, 2007).

Misrepresentation: Research (MacLennan, 2016; Nelson Mail, 2007) has identified that there is a correlation between being on a benefit and family violence or drug use. The recent events at WINZ in Ashburton around the murders of their case managers and copycat aggression towards their staff, the MSD has not got the message that men are different to women and should be treated differently. These sentiments are also echoed throughout the findings in Chapter 5. That some men have had enough of being humiliated by the current economic conditions, and felt helpless around a system that offered no escape from poverty (Bradbury, 2016). To address this, van Beynert (2016) suggests men need to step-up into the role of frontline social work roles, as women are far too much represented in frontline work, which is viewed as a highly volatile aggressive area at times. However, another underlying issue is that social services are predominately catered for by woman, who may hold anti-male tones of content due to the way they are treated as being a rare breed, and chose not to employ them in the social work profession (Galley & Parrish, 2014). Van Beynert (2016) further suggests that men will not take on these roles due to the lower remuneration that are offered; however, the salaries are very competitive for those working in statutory departments. Society needs to change the perception of gender roles in social work, and men need to be actively encouraged towards social work as a vocation, which can only take place if societies see men taking on these social work roles and removing social stigma about females being better than males in this role.

*Engagement with WINZ:* Literature in Chapter 2 disclosed how WINZ has impacted negatively on many individuals due to the way they treat their clients. This media attention makes it difficult for the participants wanting to engage with this service. Harry, the gay Māori participant believes that WINZ publicises this type of behaviour through the media to deter potential future beneficiaries from obtaining supports. All the participants that engaged with WINZ stated that they were scared to approach the agency because of the stigma associated with WINZ staff having no empathy in relation to their living conditions or of their reputation for being blatantly rude. For instance, when men raise their voices out of frustration, they are immediately removed from the premises, and if the police are involved, they are further referred to anger management courses. What is strange is that when all the participants engaged with supports from a social worker, none of these instances occurred. While such measures are sometimes appropriate, it seems that greater tact and understanding in dealing with said male clients would potentially diminish the frequency of such incidents. In addition, three participants had positive experiences with WINZ, and have suggested that it all depends on and the case manager they are allocated to that day. This again highlights the inconsistency with case managers which needs to be challenged and changed, as all case managers should offer the same service to their clients.

*Engagement with CYFs:* Participants experienced the same degradation when engaged with CYFs, which is another MSD agency. It could be argued that it would be beneficial for MSD to train staff to gain a better understanding of how male cognition and behaviour differs from that of females, which is partly due to biochemical differences, such as testosterone levels, which impacts upon aggression levels. This highlights that men need supports in learning self-control, which would suggest that all men then need anger management courses, and yet again, it is the circumstances and the situation that men find themselves in that determine their behaviours. In addition, women in front-line roles need to set aside existing prejudices towards male clients, which would deescalate men's behaviours. However, it is understandable with their concerns around safety as to what eventuated in Ashburton, that any form of abuse will not be tolerated, which should include their female clients. In addition, referring sole fathers to a parenting program

tailored to their needs, would be more constructive than labelling all men as aggressors requiring anger management. This notion, which seems to be the norm with CYFs, should be challenged. Many fathers felt that the CYFs female social workers already had a preconceived perception of male clients, and were biased by their own hidden agenda to set them up to fail. Harry disclosed: “that bitch kept on saying that she didn’t believe me and that all men are liars. She definitely had it out for me!” These are strong allegations, however, literature and research in Chapter 2 has highlighted these traits do exist by case managers in WINZ offices (Morton as cited in Robinson, 2015). In comparison, the participant that engaged with Studylink cannot believe how positive and supportive the case managers were there, compared to WINZ, and questions why there is such a huge difference with case managers when working with beneficiaries/students from one MSD department to another.

*Society’s acceptance:* Further to accessing supports, it was agreed that certain towns and districts were less accepting of single mature men taking on the role of sole fathers, as they were viewed as being homosexual. This view was shared by all participants. While there is, no current literature suggesting that some Aotearoa New Zealand towns are more homophobic than others, there are published articles such as Small-Town NZ Bigotry by Hume (2014) which assert that people living in smaller towns are more bigoted in the way they talk about homosexuals, and are hostile to being challenged about holding regressive and harmful opinions. Another article by Blake (2015), New Zealand's 'tall gay syndrome', suggests that Aotearoa New Zealand does not have a problem with gay people if they are not heard or seen; Dougan’s (2015) article, however, ranks Auckland among the world's most gay-friendly cities, suggesting that larger cities are more accepting and open than smaller towns due to diversity of both population and sexual identity. These findings were also addressed by one straight participant who came from a small town. He experienced intrusive gossip focussed on his single status making him supposedly gay. Therefore, the fear alone of being outed would restrict these sole fathers in small towns from accessing supports and having social services engage with them in their homes. Two participants attempted suicide, as they believed no one would accept or understand what they were going through. Currently suicide rates for men are higher than women in Aotearoa New

Zealand, and then with an apparent higher rate of suicide for men who are perceived as being socially different (New Zealand Daily News, 2015). The research participants feared that family and peers would reject them and their children. Many participants experienced non-acceptance by their family which they viewed as a particularly harsh punishment. Half of the participants ceased engaging with most of their family after 'coming out' this was irrespective of their age. All participants disclosed the importance of having family support which encompassed their emotional, physical and financial support. All participants also suggested that family were their hardest critics, and three quoted the old proverb "You can't choose your family but you can choose your friends."

### **Father's perception of social services**

This section will be discussed in three parts, namely father's engagement with NGO's, social workers and health professionals:

#### **Father's engagement with NGO's**

Fathers that engaged with NGO's found that they were treated with some dignity and compassion. This supports the notion that many NGO's employ social workers who are trained in working appropriately with vulnerable people, compared to statutory case managers at WINZ who are not underpinned by social work or community service training. In addition, the changes to WINZ in 2013 seemed primarily aimed at reducing the beneficiary numbers in any way and at any cost. However, when it came to programs and facilitation they felt that all the programs were tailored and designed by women, for women, leaving them (men) feeling disillusioned and inadequate when looking after their children. There are two prominent parenting programs used by agencies, namely, Triple P and Toolbox. Both offer unique perspectives around parenting and different age groups. Toolbox is focussed on a wider age range, commencing as early as lower teen years. However, this program is not free and out of the reach of many sole fathers who find the option financially non-viable.

### **Father's engagement with social workers**

Other NGO's offer advocacy work engaging with WINZ and CYFs. All participants noticed that they were treated differently when they had a social worker. This was around the meet and greet, and discussing their entitlements. One of the participants, Adam, stated that he was shocked to see how easily everything fell into place once he engaged with a social worker. Adam went out of his way to find a male social worker that was self-employed, which he found an extremely challenging task. However, he did eventually locate one with the support of his lawyer. He believes he was very lucky to have a male social worker who was very knowledgeable and well known in the community, and referred to him as a no-nonsense type of personality. He went on to relate how everything changed and fell into place when he engaged with WINZ and CYFs. Even the CYFs social worker changed her direction to support him in placing his children in his fulltime care and supported him gaining custody. This identified two issues around the lack of male front-line social workers, and social workers that can challenge the status quo.

An interesting development when interviewing the participants was that they did not understand how NGO agencies were constructed. This was evidenced by fathers that engaged with both statutory agencies, for example, CYFs and NGO's. Fathers thought that NGO's would support and advocate for them. However, on further discussion it was reported that they thought that any social worker would be able to fulfil this role for them, which Adam and Craig found out was not the case, as only certain agencies offered this type of support service. This was related to the type of services provided by the NGO, and the role and contract the agency received from MSD. What is interesting is that most of these agencies are funded by MSD. The complication here is that these NGO social workers are not able to advocate too strongly for their clients for fear of damaging their agency and jeopardising their on-going funding. This begs the question, as to what independent agencies can challenge these government departments without the fear of losing their funding, and the social worker fearing losing their job? These challenges the ideal of social work being a practical application of social justice.

### **Father's engagement with health providers**

Two participants engaged with the medical profession. Both were struggling emotionally and felt this was impacting their physical health and wellbeing. Both experienced similar discourse that the medical professionals made light of the fact that they were struggling to take care of their child(ren). This type of behaviour was not well received by the men. Humour at times plays an important part in breaking down barriers. However, these fathers did not find that humour alleviated their situation, nor did they get the referral they wanted. On further discussion with the participants, it seemed that the medical staffs were not aware of social service supports outside the scope of their medical practise. In addition, on entering their medical practitioner's office there were no pamphlets offering supports except those of Plunket and the Red Cross. There seems to be a need for medical practitioners in private practice to look beyond their roles as doctors and include more material around social services within their community and districts, or at least know who to refer their clients to for more information. The opposite can be said about the District Hospitals that employ social workers, who can direct patients to other Allied Health social services within their area. There is a move to integrate NGO's as Allied Health players, and inform potential clients of their existence via a computer-generated referral program through to all General Practitioners (HealthLink, 2016).

### **Social stigma**

Social stigma was identified around the gender roles fathers' chose due to the different interpretations around sexuality, either being straight and gay had on their ability to parent or have families. This will be discussed under the following headings, namely, society's norms, legislation, and religion:

#### **Society's norms**

This section will be discussed under the following headings, namely, reason of becoming a sole father, gender caregiver preferences, creating families, paedophilia, gender discrimination and homosexuality:



Reasons of becoming sole fathers: With all these changes that have taken place within our society, literature still identifies that many men became sole fathers through separation, death or whānau agreements. There are a lesser number of men in our society who are keen to adopt or foster as sole parents. The Adoption Act 1955 is currently under review. One would have thought that the government would have changed this Act at the same time of the Civil Union changes to legislation which allowing men and woman to be in a partnership legally. Each father that undertook the role of sole father would not change anything about stepping into this reverse gender role. They have learnt so much about themselves, their strengths and weakness and the overall wellbeing and aware of their surroundings and societies expectations of parents.

Gender caregiver preferences: Harry disclosed just because he is a guy, there were concerns that his daughters would be better off with their mother, as it is not normal for a guy to look after girls. This is what a CYFs official told him. Once he informed her that he was gay, she asked him if he had any sons or men living with him, to which he responded “What the fuck!” The mature gay participants did not believe that equality would have happened in their lifetimes. They are happy that official discrimination has ended and that new generations will grow up in a society in which homosexuality is normalised. All the participants, however, believed that society was not yet truly accepting of their sexuality, as they were still unable to show affection in public places, unlike their straight counterparts. There is a distinct difference between straight and gay men taking on this role. This is due to a legacy of heteronormativity and legislation that previously discriminated against gay men creating families and what society perceived a (heterosexual) family to look like, compared to same sex cohabitation (Šmídová, 2007).

Creating families: Craig and Harry were the only participants that came close to undertaking legal adoption. However, they did look at the process of adoption and what was offered to them. Currently ‘A home for life’ is offered to most children through CYFs and the Court system (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). Craig did not believe this was the best option for him, as he already had day-to-day care and guardianship over his child. Craig still encourages his son’s biological parents to be part of his child’s life.

However, this is on his terms, whereas, 'A Home for Life' would take away his rights and he would be negotiating with CYFs and the Courts for the rest of his life around visitation with the child's parents.

Harry was the other participant that applied through the Court for his first child under whānau agreement. Both Harry and Craig agree that this was a financial and emotional strain on them, and that they would never go down this road again. Both participants did not have CYFs intervention or financial support. However, Harry was approached by CYFs for his second child. He stated that he could not believe the difference and ease from his previous experience which was applying to the Family Court and working with his and the child's lawyers. This highlights the discourse around power and control from an institutionalised organisation who restricted men from having a family, and only implement changes that suit their own agenda. It was already evidenced that participants did not want to engage with WINZ due to the stigma associated with this type of agency.

*Paedophilia:* Literature around the topic of paedophilia identified that perpetrators are more likely not to be the father of that child (Hobbs, Hobbs & Wynne, 1999). The trope of homosexual men being attracted to boys appears to continue to play on society's perception of gay men and their sexual practices, while our society still views men, and more to the point gay men as predators. This had led to their partners, wives, family and friends reporting their concerns around their sexuality and gender to police and CYFs. These sentiments were echoed by Craig and Ewen when they engaged with a CYFs social worker in the hope of taking care of child(ren). Craig was questioned continuously about grooming and Ewen around his sexual practices when his children were present.

All the sole fathers disclosed that they had either being part of a discussion or it was implied that society predetermines them to have a larger tendency to be paedophiles, leaving them in disbelief and angered, that anyone could suggest that they would perform sexual acts on their child(ren). Fathers felt that they could not offer a public or private psychical or emotional display such as a hug or kiss, in case is was misconstrued as a sexual act. Literature around this topic identified that while paedophilia exists perpetrators are

more likely not to be the father of their child (Witchel, 2011; Parker and Parker as cited in Callister, 1995; Callister 1995; Hobbs, Hobbs & Wynne, 1999).

*Gender discrimination:* Fathers felt disheartened and betrayed by the common belief that woman is the best caregivers of their child(ren). Literature suggests that women are favoured with smaller children as the child may still be nursing and because mothers have a maternal instinct to care. This may be true; however, fathers with younger children coped just as well as mothers. Fathers found it emotionally stressful when they felt that they had to prove to society that they can be both mother and father, instead of accepting that they are just as perfect in doing determined feminine roles such as cooking, cleaning and taking care of their children, and can still be viewed as masculine in their role as dads. Furthermore, it seems that teenage children tend to live with their fathers, but this seems to be short-lived based on gender, with most female teenagers returning to the care of their mothers and most teenage boys remaining with their fathers. Interestingly, this preference was not due to the teenage girl's biological changes but because fathers had more rules which they enforced more strictly. Society seems to watch sole father's more than sole mothers, and their capability of parenting, and father felt that they had to prove all the time that they were better than their female counterparts putting further strain on their emotional wellbeing. Not too long ago, fathers raised their sons and mother their daughters, and some tribal societies still follow this practice which seemed to be an acceptable norm (Perz, 2001; Locke, 2005).

*Homosexuality:* Frank's life changed drastically between 1981 and 1984 when the AIDS epidemic hit New York and the rest of the world watched as the epidemic reached over their borders. Goedert (2000) disclosed that thousands of gay men died during this time and worldwide bathhouses closed as society blamed gay men for spreading the disease. During this period, religious groups rallied behind claims that homosexuality was an abomination and abnormal. Frank found himself suppressing his sexuality in the fear of what would happen to him, and chose to follow a straight lifestyle, and he believes was common for men in his situation. This started to change when heterosexual people started being diagnosed with AIDS, challenging theories about how the disease was spread. Many

believed that normalising homosexuality would help reduce the risk of men contracting the disease. Participants who lived during this time felt that there had been a shift towards acceptance before the arrival of AIDS, but that this changed once AIDS became a household name. Many participants reported experiencing self-imposed social isolation during this period out of fear of being ostracised and shamed. Half of the participants believe the stigma of HIV and AIDS remains rife within our community and these ideologies have stopped sole fathers from 'coming out' and requesting social service supports including counselling. Furthermore, discouraging them from using social services to either adopt or foster children in the fear of stigma as being classified as gay or carrying HIV. Harry works in the social service sector and has struggled with the acceptance of being gay in the past: "I've been called queer, fag, homo, go kill yourself kiddy-fiddler, all in the name of god, so why would you want to put yourself out there!"

## **Legislation**

This section will be discussed under the following headings, namely, the family structure, gay men, the Family Court, and the legal system:

*Family structures:* Aotearoa New Zealand families are changing, and this can be associated with changes to legislation which has impacted the participants and their decision making in taking care of their child(ren). However, for legislation to change, it must come from a voice, and this voice is the people of Aotearoa New Zealand. These families include men who have chosen to become sole fathers out of choice or for the betterment of their child(ren).

*Gay men:* Historically, literature has identified that gay men were controlled by legislation around sexual practices and how they become fathers. Therefore, it is important to discuss how society and the laws around them have changed to allow all men to be free from discrimination and the freedom to have a family. Social services are intertwined with legislation and in our society; it is impossible for any single man, either gay or straight, to be able to have a family either to adopt, conceive or apply for day-to-day care without engaging with one or more of these statutory or non-government social services.

Family Court: Two fathers chose to proceed to the Family Court, but they were left with large legal bills which had the obvious adverse effect on their financial situation. Ironically, the mothers of their child(ren) received Legal Aid for this process, and threatened them with further legal action just to be vindictive. Out of the eight participants only one mother was paying child support, as she could afford to do so. Adam disclosed “my wife resigned from her job so I couldn’t claim child support from her.” This highlights the vindictiveness that can take place between parents and which only causes further alienation from their child(ren), causing rebellious and unacceptable behaviours linking participants to engagement with police, CYFs and other social services.

Legal System: All the participants had engaged with the police as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. However, fathers who engaged with the legal system, for example, lawyers and Courts, found this very restrictive due to the cost and not being able to get legal aid. Furthermore, Court decisions were biased towards children being better off with their mothers than with their fathers.

## **Religion**

Religion in our century has played a significant role in identifying the roles of man and wife and their responsibilities towards parenting. Literature identified that younger children are favoured to be cared for by their mothers, and when children get older, that boys are predominately taken care for by their fathers (Amato, 2000; Hetherington, 2003; Neilson, 1999; Smyth, 2004, as cited in Mitchell & Chapman, 2009; Pettitt, 2000). This may be true in the normal conventional families that have separated or divorced. However, it seems that not all participants were concerned about age and gender of the children in their care. Two non-biological fathers, Harry and Craig, both agreed that it would not have changed their disposition towards their children if they were female, as you do not fall in love with a gender but a person.

There are still parts of society that are struggling with this concept of change, which impact fathers on accessing supports, and this can be viewed worldwide with the political atrocities against human kind. Women around the world are choosing to stand together

in the hope to create change, as there are huge areas of misogyny within the world that still discriminate against gender and the freedom of expression. Examples of these include assaults and killings of gays in both religious extreme-ruled and secular nations. However, not too far from home we still have pockets in society opposing men in general from taking on the role of sole fathers (Šmídová, 2007; McLennan, Ryan, and Spoonley, 2004).

### **Social work interaction**

Social worker's mandatory registration is looking to take place in 2017. The problem with this is that the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) is a government entity and governed by MSD. MSD also controls the funding for most NGO's and CYFs. So, what does that say about the profession, and how do social workers advocate for social justice within these restraints of funding and contracting obligations in Aotearoa New Zealand? Minister Tolley has suggested making social work registration mandatory will ensure it is viewed as a profession, and that social workers become accountable not only to themselves but to the public. However, where does this leave sole fathers when they need a social worker or agencies to advocate for their rights and entitlements, which are not being met by the MSD? This was evidenced by Ewen who felt he was not getting anywhere until he found an independent social worker who was willing to challenge the authorities by stating he would go to the newspapers and name and shame the professionals. Ewen also disclosed that his social worker had a long conversation with him about engaging with newspapers as it could be detrimental to the social workers ongoing profession and could potentially scare off his future clients.

However, even though many fathers were aware of the above challenges, it was not important to them during their time of struggle. What they wanted was someone to support and assist them through the difficulties they were experiencing. What was interesting is that most of the fathers felt they were or would be better off supported by a male social worker than a female one. Craig, who had engaged with quite a few social workers over the years, suggested that once he engaged with a male social worker, things stated to change for him, as he could sort out his issues within weeks, stating that it was good to have a bloke that understood him. This was around how they perceived that a

professional of the same gender would understand them better than a female. This may well be the case, and perhaps be considered when men seek such supports. However, most participants could not find any male frontline social workers and blamed this on the stigma associated with men doing this type of work, which is done predominately by women (Warde, 2009).

## **Chapter summary**

In summary, all the participants in this research had the same issues around accessing social supports irrespective of ethnicity. Participants noted a vast difference in the level of cultural awareness between social service agencies. The non-New Zealand born participants felt that the social services they approached did not consider their sexuality, language or cultural needs. Furthermore, the Māori participant was not offered cultural representation as stated in the Treaty of Waitangi. It was recognised that social services need to become more inclusive in their outreach and adequately support men, as well as women.

There were reoccurring themes around how father's frustrations were viewed as being angry, which had adverse consequences of either being removed or restricted access to social services. Being single over a long period of time suggested that they had to be gay, and with that a different set of standards evolved around paedophilia and grooming. Programs were mainly set for sole mothers and sole fathers found these programs either non-supportive or helpful with their parenting roles. Stigma associated with asking for supports suggested that men were weak and not capable of taking care of their children. Social norms around relationships and parenting still play a pivotal part on how a family is previewed which is still based on religious beliefs, and the interpretation of legislation seems to be complex and in some parts, restricts sole fathers in aspects of taking care of their children.

The social work profession is currently undergoing change, and as our society is evolving, and the roles of men are changing, the need for more men to be employed as social workers to change the perception of our society which seems to be struggling with men in

general taking on roles that were predominately done by women. In order to reflect the ever-changing state of society, the social work profession needs to become more gender-balanced so as to meet the needs of all clients. The lack of social services devised for men are wanting and a Ministry for men is required to regulate and support men.

Fathers expressed their emotions which ranged from anger, to feeling belittled and moving to tears when faced by society's norms around relationships, parenting, and creating families. The participants perceived these thoughts and actions to be focused around religious beliefs and the construction of legislation. However, it should be about being a sole father and the positive interaction with their families and social services that need to be acknowledged. However, the reality is; which was vocalised by Craig, that "men just go with the flow, as that is the way things are just done". It is this sentiment that echoed through the process of working with men, as they believed that they must conform to accessing existing supports, and should not show their real emotions or disagreements when engaging with services as "that is the way things are just done."



# Chapter Seven: Conclusion

## Introduction

This chapter will review the research question: What are sole father's experiences when accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand and outline the methodological approach used in this study. The key findings are based on the four auxiliary questions, namely, (1). What does the structure of the family look like? (2). What interactions do father have with social services? (3). What social stigma do participants experience? (4). Is social work ready to advocate for sole fathers? Which will be discussed and the implications arising from these findings will be outlined. In addition, recommendations will be offered for future research on sole fathers who choose to take care of their children and require social service supports. Finally, the author will discuss his personal reflection on the thesis findings.

## Research objective

The research undertook to answer the research question by addressing the perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. Furthermore, providing insight into how social workers can best engage and support sole fathers accessing these supports. This was achieved by utilising the Interpretivist research methodology, as it best suited to support the thesis focus. Interpretivist research methods allowed the researcher to explore the nature of the phenomenon and to describe the way it manifested and identify underlying processes (Polit & Hunger, 2001). Semi-structured interviews were identified as the best approach because of their inherent flexibility which allows participants to feel that their narratives have meaning and that they are clearly understood. The primary research tool used was the personal in-depth interviews. There were four key findings relating to: (1). Reasons fathers engaged or disengaged from social service supports. (2). Fathers' experiences of

social services. (3). Fathers' perceptions and reactions to stigma. (4). Legislative changes on the social work profession.

### **Key finding One: Reasons fathers engaged or disengaged from social service supports**

The first finding related to the reasons why fathers engaged and disengaged with social services supports. It was found that this was based on the structure of the participant's family due to separation, divorce, change of sexual orientation or death of a spouse/partner. This finding is consistent with literature on men becoming sole fathers. Three participants changed their sexual orientation, found the change extremely difficult as they had to come to terms with their own sexual identity, and Harry identified himself as always being gay. Moreover, to avoid stigmatisation, two participants from this group did not 'come out' to colleagues and the rest of society. In addition to their sexuality all the participants found the transition in becoming a sole father complex, as they had to learn to change their personal ideologies of what was viewed as the normal role of a man to incorporate a different lifestyle in accommodating their new role as a sole parent, and the challenges they experienced within the social norms of our society. This will be discussed in two parts namely, engagement and disengagement with social services:

#### **Engagement with services**

Five of the fathers did not set out to become sole fathers, and the remaining two chose to become fathers out of necessity to support the child(ren) that came into their care. The majority of fathers found themselves engaging with WINZ due to reducing their working hours to take care of their child(ren). Furthermore, fathers found that they were engaged with CYFs or police due to reports and notifications made against them by family, friends and schools. From these notifications fathers were referred to NGO's for parenting and anger management programmes, and those that chose not to engage with WINZ found themselves requesting supports from local churches and food banks.

### **Disengagement with services**

The majority of participants disengaged with service due to either gaining full employment, completed mandatory programmes, participant's children became of legal age or their children were removed from their care by CYFs.

### **Key finding Two: Fathers' experiences of social services**

The second key finding concerned the experiences fathers endured when engaging with social services and identifying the differences in the engagement style and process between statutory and non-government agencies. When participants started enquiring about social service supports, it became evident that the participants encountered obstacles in accessing accurate and useful information from statutory agencies. Research had to be undertaken to find out which entitlements were available, and it seems this was not just related to participants, but to most beneficiaries; this avenue was only open to participants who had access to the World Wide Web and a sufficiently level of education to understand how to do online research and to understand the often-technical language used to describe supports. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the social service system is based on 'Third Way' policies which stress a hands-up and not a hands-out approach to social services. This will be discussed in two parts, namely, statutory services and NGO's:

#### **Statutory services**

The following statutory agencies were accessed: WINZ, CYFs, Corrections, Studylink, Schools, Police, Legal system (lawyers and Court). Participants applying for social service supports had to provide proof that their child(ren) were legally in their primary care, an undertaking that typically required seeking legal advice. Participants disclosed that they never heard of a mother having to prove that they have legal custody over their children and that a birth certificate normally sufficed. In contrast, participants of this study were routinely instructed to contact a lawyer who then advised them that the application needed to proceed through the Family Court to finalise matters, and that this was likely to be a lengthy process. The need to support their child(ren) financially while this process proceeded was ongoing and a source of additional stress and anxiety. As previously stated,

many participants did not want any supports, as it showed their perceived weakness, and that they were not able to support their families and themselves.

Those participants that received financial supports from WINZ felt that the funds they received were far below the acceptable living threshold. All the participants did not chose to apply for financial supports, it was the circumstances some found themselves in; their struggles in obtaining financial supports clearly identified Third-Way Policies in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Sole fathers that engaged with CYFs have made it very clear that the social workers who met with them had preconceived ideas around parenting, values, dating and sexuality. Fathers felt that the preconceived perceptions about men being violent, sex offenders, grooming and paedophilia emerged as considerable barriers when engaging with agencies. While in contrast, children were placed in their care when accommodation and living arrangements were not available for these child(ren).

### **Non-Government Organisations**

The following agencies were accessed by participants: family, Christian and Churches agencies, NGO's, family support and parenting agencies, doctors and nurses. There are two types of referrals and interactions with non-government agencies. Participants were either self-referred to these agencies or advised to do so by statutory agencies to meet Court Orders requirements. The advisability/suitability of some of these referrals was open to debate.

### **Key finding Three: Fathers' perceptions and reactions to social stigma**

The third finding related to fathers' reactions when fathers were engaging with social services, and being confronted by social stigma which will be discussed under the following headings, namely, father's reactions, statutory engagement, NGO's engagement, society, legislation and religion:

### **Father's reactions**

The participants found sharing their emotions difficult, as they viewed this as a weakness. However, the difference between being straight and gay was also evident, as the gay men that were interviewed were more expressive and emotional compared to their counterparts. Therefore, the role of men is changing, and in having a child, either through fostering, whānau agreement, adoption or surrogacy is changing the dynamics of how we view a family.

### **Statutory Engagement**

All the fathers agreed it was difficult to put aside their emotions and self-worth when asking for help. Fathers that were engaged by statutory agencies found it very belittling at first, which later turned into anger and disbelief around the situation they had found themselves in. Those fathers that engaged with WINZ found it very degrading and did not want to go and ask for help. Engaging with frontline case managers brought mixed emotions from initial shock that they cannot get help as they do not qualify, or do not have proof that they are the fathers; to anger, shouting, shocked, disillusioned, or just walking away to avoid being removed by security. However, fathers that engaged with a social worker, irrespective of gender, felt empowered, unlike when dealing with an obstructive case manager.

### **NGO's Engagement**

Fathers that engaged with NGO's had mixed feelings, from those that chose to engage with the service, and those who were ordered to do so. Initially, they thought the services were a waste of time, feeling frustrated with the direction in which it was going. Those fathers that were fully engaged felt hopeful, relieved, and happy and supported.

### **Society**

This section will be discussed in five parts, namely, beneficiaries, parenting, homosexuality, legislation and religion:

*Beneficiaries:* All participants agreed that society still struggles with the notion of men being on a benefit or gaining supports, as this is not an acceptable norm, as a man should be working and taking care of his family.

*Parenting:* There is still some resistance to men taking care of their children, especially men taking care of younger children, and more to the point their daughters.

*Homosexuality:* Ewen and Gary left their towns due to their sexuality. They felt that it was better if they started afresh without anyone knowing their sexuality. Gary disclosed his sexuality in his new community and he did not experience bigotry or discrimination. Participants feared that family and peers would reject them and their children. Two participants experienced non-acceptance by their family which they viewed as a particularly harsh punishment. Frank and Harry ceased engaging with most of their family after 'coming out'. Ewen identified himself as bisexual, as he did not want to be identified as gay, as it helped him to be removed from the stigma associated with being gay and the legislation that restricted gay men in having families. He felt that being bisexual was more acceptable to society, and believed that the term 'bisexual' made it easier for his children to understand his role in their procreation.

The belief that all gay men spread HIV is still rife in communities. Literature reported that society perceived gay men having a larger tendency to be paedophiles, which was not true. Literature around this topic identified that while paedophilia exists, perpetrators being men in this case, are more likely linked to women or men that are family members or someone they are dating. The trope of homosexual men being attracted to boys appears to continue to play on society's perception of gay men, with many in society still viewing them as predators.

*Legislation:* Three fathers found it difficult when engaging with the Family Court and other statutory agencies. Two fathers had to prove they were not aberrant before they could have access to their children. One participant who was denied access by CYFs due to

historic family violence was approached only a few years later by the same agency to take on the day-to-day care of his child(ren). Don continues to struggle with the agency's dismissive attitude to his earlier claims of his spouse's bad character and the poor standard of care his child(ren) received from her. This is relevant as the Family Court will not accept any parent that has a violent history towards any immediate family member, and therefore, will not give a violent parent custody or unsupervised access to their child or young person, unless the Court is satisfied that the child will be safe with the violent parent (Ministry of Justice, 2016). The onus, however, seems to be placed on the father to prove that he did not do what his spouse has alleged. Craig had his children removed due to the legal system believing his estranged partner's affidavit and not actually having the full truth about the situation. He believes his estranged partner only had to claim that he was beating or verbally abusing her and his children to have him arrested and removed from his home. Exclusion and expulsion through alleged manipulation of events was a common theme among participants interviewed.

The Adoption Act 1995 did not allow men the legal opportunity to adopt child(ren). The Adoption Act 1955 is currently under review with the changes to the Marriage Act 1955, with the changes to word spouse to include all sexes. All the straight fathers believed that they would not adopt a child in their lifetime; however, Craig would consider fostering at a later stage in his life.

Religion: All the straight participants were encouraged to date and to remarry so that their children would have a mother. One of those participants suggested that they will never get married or take a partner while they have children in their care. One of the participants is actively involved with their church and believes social norms in the Church are still strong around family values and dynamics of what family looks like.

The bisexual father suggested that he would remarry even though he had a preference to be with men more than women. This decision was influenced by his faith that a man should marry a woman and his belief that no-one would question his sexuality if he was married.

## **Key finding Four: Legislative changes on the social work profession**

The fourth finding concerns the changing environment and interactions with social workers. This study has recognised two discourses for social work practice and the recommendations for betterment of service delivery. These are discussed as they pertain firstly to the implications for social services administration by the MSD. Secondly, social work registration and the implications towards the profession, SWRB and the MSD. These implications will now be summarised and discussed in terms of their contribution to knowledge relating to fathers accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand:

### **Implications of key findings**

The research aim was to answer the research question, what are sole father's experiences when accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand. In doing so, offering insight on what needs to change to accommodate and support sole fathers when asking for supports when taking care of themselves and their child(ren). These will be discussed in five parts, namely, society, social services, social work, legislation and religion:

*Society:* Laws are always changing and with change sometimes diversity and fresher insights into how laws impact individuals, communities, towns and countries. These changes can only take place by having a voice and making sure that your voice counts. Over the past 60 years, Aotearoa New Zealand laws have been modernised to extend equality across society, improving conditions for marginalised groups and those subjected to institutionalised discrimination; furthermore, how these changes have affected the role of women, homosexual law reform, family structure, civil unions and marriage equality within our society. These are additional to huge changes in how we run our economy due to the ascendancy of neo-liberalism, privatisation, massive unemployment and the evolving roles of men and how masculinity is constructed in this environment.

*Social services:* Most social services are administered and funded by the MSD. The Ministry's roles changes per the political party that is in power. The current reforms



included beneficiary supports which are based on Third-way policies of a hands-up and not a hands-out approach, and with all hands-up there are legal obligations that need to be followed, otherwise the individuals will find themselves without supports. Men finding themselves in this situation of applying for a benefit (hands-up) seem to be struggling with society's perception of men accessing these supports as being weak and a burden to society.

*Social work:* Aotearoa New Zealand is currently undergoing change as the introduction of compulsory registration will make social workers accountable to the public as a recognised profession in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, with these teething problems, there is a few conflicts of interest around the administrative aspects that need to be addressed. The MSD is currently the administrator of the SWRB, CYFs, WINZ, Studylink, Pensions and so forth. In addition, they process, audit and provide funding to NGO's leaving little or no opportunities for social workers to advocate for change.

*Legislation:* Legislation still impacts men becoming fathers, for example, The Adoption Act 1955. Research has identified that first time parents for adoption want to have a new-born baby, which has left many couples and singles looking outside the law to create and maintain a family. Then there are men that do not want to marry who also wish to have a family and cannot do so under the Adoption Act 1955, as it restricts men irrespective of their sexuality. Men taking on the fathering role can find themselves engaged with legislative Acts, namely, The CYPF Act 1989 and the Care of Children Act 2004 which are both relevant and linked with The Family Court; which still distinguishes favouring mothers over fathers when it comes to the day-to-day care of their younger child(ren). Without clarity around the processes of litigation and the rights of fathers, men will continue to seek answers online and from other potentially unreliable sources which could lead to them developing hardened positions based on incorrect information.

The current review to the changes to the CYPF Act 1989 is aimed at working with our vulnerable children to include the voices of our child(ren), either themselves or through the child's legal representative. This will hopefully remove the stigma associated with men

only being violent and some mothers using their children as pawns to hurt their fathers who are being misrepresented as violent. As to children in care, it seems to be acceptable when CYFs wants to place a child with a single man or gay couple when they cannot find alternative accommodation, and yet single men cannot adopt a child.

Religion: Currently there are vast changes taking place internationally regarding religion. The most obvious changes are within the Roman Catholic faith. The Roman Catholic Church has historically been opposed to same sex marriage and unions. However, Vatican encyclicals assert that charitable treatment should be accorded to gays (Lifesitenews, 2005, para. 8). The Vatican's website explains that the Church's opposition to homosexuality is based on the concept of unnatural relationship relative to procreation; furthermore, that sex is primarily designed for begetting (to procreate or generate (offspring)) children. As to the other religions, Religious Facts (2015) concludes the most common consensus surrounding 'gaydom' from different versions of the Bible, naming a few, In the name of Christianity, New International Version, New American Standard Bible, King James Version and The Message) the Bible identifies gaydom as detestable, an abomination and abhorrent. There are many social service agencies that work under the umbrella of religion, and receive funding from the MSD, and yet many of these agencies still struggle working with men, and even more so, employing gay men to engage with their clients.

## **Research recommendations**

The researcher identified three areas for future research based on the findings, namely, Ministry for men, gay parenting and social work advocacy and engagement:

### **Ministry for men**

During the study, it became evident that further social research into related topics would benefit men, fathers and custodial fathers in general, particularly the relationship between fathering and the legal rights and custodial arrangements that relate to fathers. It would be desirable to use such methods to highlight positive aspects of sole father's status to challenge the perceived notion of sole mothers as preferred custodial parents.

## **Gay parenting**

It is important for a national qualitative research study, on a similar scale to the Lavender Parent Study, be undertaken, to explore the societal themes that may or have developed around the relationships gay custodial fathers identify since the Human Rights Act 1993 was implemented. This would include the changes to the Marriage Act 1955, and how these Acts have changed the consensus view of how families are formed and maintained as being gay parents.

## **Social work advocacy and engagement**

Furthermore, the findings of this research will offer ideas as to how social workers can best advocate and support sole fathers engaging with social services:

- Professionals need to re-evaluate their programs to be inclusive of men who are sole fathers, considering how men process and learn differently to that of woman.
- Men must be made aware of having strategic plans in place to direct their behaviour, which might be interpreted as aggressive, to more constructive ends.
- Pettitt's (2000) discussion of obstacles for men seems to be around women who have hidden agendas in the profession of social welfare, as policy in this regard is written by women for women.
- Employing trained and qualified personnel to engage with our most vulnerable, and take away gender biases.
- CYFs have social workers to engage and support our most vulnerable children, so why do we not have social workers employed by WINZ completing the assessments for our most vulnerable families.
- Changes to the Department of Corrections practise of employing social workers purely as Probations Officers minimises the role of social justice and advocacy, leaving a huge gap in this area of trained professionals working in probation.
- Social workers need to have knowledge of legislation, and how legislation restricts men in becoming fathers, who want to adopt or foster. However, the contradiction is when

CYFs needs to place a child in care, and they cannot find a suitable couple, then it seems acceptable to place a child in the care of single man which needs to be addressed in our legislation and policy changes.

- It is evident that the erratic psychological reactions to become a parent must be advocated for by trained social workers who understand gender differences and human behaviours.
- Encouraging men to become frontline social service workers in the hope of making positive change.

### **Limitations of the study**

The following limitations were identified, firstly, how literature on custodial fathers is limited, especially with an Aotearoa New Zealand context. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised as they pertain specifically to the participants involved, methodology deployed and the small number of participants in the study. In addition, some of the information acquired during the semi-structured interview was explicitly private and confidential and had to be excluded, as well as how other ethnic groups could potentially identify different parenting problems.

### **Strengths of the study**

The following two strengths were identified, firstly, how the advertised research request (Appendix H) caused a few unexpected responses from other parenting and men's groups who wanted to start their own research related to the research question. This confirmed that there is currently a need for this type of research to take place within our country and the research topic was relevant. Secondly, there was an influx of men applying to partake in the research, which identified that men are starting to talk about their experiences and emotions when it comes to parenting and taking on the role of sole fathers.

### **Personal reflections on the research journey**

As a social worker, I believed that I was ready to undertake a thesis of this nature. However, the narratives presented by each participant offered new insights and challenges; these

needed to be explored and understood to identify the phenomenon within the methodology of this thesis. Semi-structured interviews were identified as the best approach because of their inherent flexibility which allows participants to feel that their narratives have meaning and that they are clearly understood.

While many of the participants disclosed personal information outside of this research topic, this information was not lost on me; I used it to identify other topics not initially identified within the scope of the study by identifying these topics as strengths, limitations and future research topics. Those fathers' experiences have bearing on all fathers, irrespective of whether they took care of their child(ren), this being the discourse many men felt when applying to the Family Court for access, day-to-day care, or shared care with their spouse/partner. Furthermore, participants felt that their voices were not being heard or considered when stating what type of supports they needed to get them through their current predicament. Ten years on from my own experiences of trying to gain custody and accessing supports, there seems to be no improvement in service delivery, and the lack of male social workers is still very evident even though there is evidence that men are engaged in social work education. However, as a social worker I found that anti-male tones played a role in my employment which directed me into private practice. As a dad, a man and social worker, the research findings still dishearten me that men wanting to have a family are still excluded on something so special as being able to parent alone.

I found it difficult to accept and understand that social services were still aimed in supporting programs created for women or not willing to change or adapt them to meet men's' needs. The biases men faced engaging with their case managers or social workers who are supposedly employed to support and advocate for positive change, seemed to be very selective. Furthermore, with the changes taking place within the social sector, namely the MSD having the monopoly over funding and administrative duties over the SWRB, leaves me apprehensive as to the fundamental aspects of social work being restricted by policy, namely, in terms of advocacy and social justice. In addition, removing unrestricted professional voices and supports that advocate for change is a possibility. The hope that the ANZASW will champion for these changes, about monopoly and power over the social work profession gives me hope that the vocation will offer advocacy and social justice for now and the future. The struggles of discrimination and sexism based on gender roles is

slowly changing, however, religious beliefs that still linger may restrict men from accessing NGO supports, as a large majority are based on religious values and beliefs. In addition, how these values restrict men, and more to the point, gay men in applying and working in these religious agencies.

This research left me feeling that the strengths and determination of our fathers to succeed needs to be acknowledged. This was due to the confusion and restrictions they faced about their rights to create a family, supports and entitlements offered, legal rights to being a dad, society's struggles and religious beliefs in maintaining their families. Fathers should be proud, as they took the step in accepting supports, and by doing so, helped themselves and their children.

The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope [Barack Obama, 2016].

I hope the results presented in this research will provide insight into the constitutive view of the socially constructed tensions around fathering as very little research has been done in the field of gender reversal and society's disposition towards sole fathers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **Chapter summary**

This final section completes this study on the on-going journey of men that became sole fathers out of the necessity of their child(ren)'s well-being or out of choice to become a sole father. The aim of this research was to explore the experiences and perspectives of sole fathers when accessing assistance and supports from statutory and non-government agencies. This chapter presents the results from the research participants. The findings identified that men are still faced with obstacles under legislation, religion and societal norms that restrict men from becoming a father, maintaining, creating or supporting a family. It is expected that the four main aims of the research will support social workers

address inequality in society, irrespective of a clients' sexual orientation or lifestyle. Given recent changes in legislation, social workers are likely to increasingly find themselves working with sole fathers of all ages, races, sexual identity and religion during their practice; as such it would be beneficial for social work practitioners to understand the struggles and discrimination experienced by men in Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere. Aotearoa New Zealand is a signatory member of the United Nations and an outspoken advocate for Human Rights globally. However, within Aotearoa New Zealand's own boundaries inequalities are present and discrimination takes place; these need to be addressed and discrepancies in the treatment of fathers living an alternative lifestyle need to be equalised. As a nation, we have already accepted diversity in our Government by the inclusion of homosexual and transsexual Members of Parliament. We were also the first country to give women the vote. However, here we are in the 21st century and sole fathers are yet to achieve equality despite scientific knowledge confirming that men are just as good at raising children as their female counterparts.

Furthermore, effective welfare provision includes solving practical problems such as finances and unemployment, and involves short-term crisis intervention. Social welfare seeks to promote the effective functioning of individuals by supporting them until they have the skills and internal resources to resolve their own problems. Social welfare supports are often criticised for not considering structural changes and restrictions within a society; future research should focus on societal obstacles to accepting sole fathers. Social workers are taught to understand the context in which individuals live within a society and as social work is of a contextual nature, so too must be the understanding of the world we live in. Aotearoa New Zealand policies and laws should be amended to ensure that sole fathers have the rights and opportunities to create, maintain and support their families. As our society matures, acceptance and understanding of differences should too; it is hoped that this will result one day soon in a common appreciation that fatherhood is as important as motherhood.

## Bibliography

- Adoption (2016). *The adoption process in New Zealand*. Retrieved from the Adoption.option webpage:  
<http://www.adoptionoption.org.nz/adoption/adoption-process-nz/>
- Adoption Act 1955, No. 93. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- Akrtlof, G. A., & Kranton, R. E. (2000). Economics and Identify. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (CXV)3, 175-753.
- Alice, L., & Star, L. (2004). *Queer in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Amato, P. R. (2004). *Parenting through family transition*. Retrieved from Ministry of Social Development Website: <http://www.msdc.govt.nz/documents/about-msdc-and-our-work/publications-resources/journals-and-magazines/social-policy-journal/spj23/23-pages31-44.pdf>.
- American Psychological Association (2005). *Lesbian & Gay Parenting*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (2008). *Code of Ethics* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Christchurch, New Zealand: Author.
- Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (2008b). *Competency handbook* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Christchurch, New Zealand: Author.
- Ashton, A. (2016, May 17). *Homeless borrow thousands for motels*. Radio New Zealand: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/304122/homeless-borrow-thousands-for-motels>
- Aspin, C. (2005, June). *The Place of Takatāpui Identity within Māori Society: Reinterpreting Māori Sexuality within a Contemporary Context*. University of Auckland. Paper presented at The Meeting of Competing Diversities: Traditional Sexualities and Modern Western Sexual Identity Constructions Conference, Mexico City.



- Aspin, C. (2007) *"Takatāpui – Confronting Demonisation" Sexuality and the Stories of Indigenous People*. Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers.
- Aspin, C., & Hutchings, J. (2006). Māori sexuality. In M. Mulholland (Eds). *State of the Māori Nation: twenty-first-century issues in Aotearoa*. Auckland, New Zealand: Reed.
- Atkinson, M. P., & Blackwelder, S. P. (1993). Fathering in the 20th Century. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 55(4), 975-986.
- Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2003). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press.
- Ball, D. (October, 2015). *Minister Fails to Address WINZ Security*. Retrieved from ScoopNZ Webpage: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1510/S00079/minister-fails-to-address-winz-security.htm>.
- Banks, S. (2006). *Ethics and values in social work*. (3rd ed.). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Beckett, C., & Maynard, A. (2005). *Values & ethics in social work: An introduction*. London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Becroft, A. J. (2006, August). Youth offending: Factors that contribute and how the system responds. In C. Kiro (Chair), *Child and youth offenders: What works*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of Children's Commissioner, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Benzie, P. (2001). *Fatherhood and Christianity*. Retrieved from Father & Child Webpage: <http://fatherandchild.org.nz/magazine/issue-46/fatherhood-and-christianity/>
- Birks, S. (2001). *Children's rights and families: proceedings of social policy forum 2000* (Printable version). Retrieved August 20, 2015, from: <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~wwcppe/papers/cppeip12/cppeip12.pdf>
- Birks, S., & Callister, P. (1999). *Perspectives on fathering II*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University.
- Blake, S. (2015). *New Zealand's 'tall gay syndrome'*. Retrieved January 1, 2016 from Stuff.co.nz Webpage: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff-nation/assignments/is-new-zealand-a-gay-basher/11752830/New-Zealands-tall-gay-syndrome>.

- Blundor, R., & Greene, R. R. (2008) *Social construction*. In Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice (3rd ed). Ed. R. R. Greene, Aldine Transaction, New Brunswick, New York, pp. 237-264.
- Bonoli, G. (2007). The politics of the new social policies: providing coverage against new social risk in mature welfare states. In C. Pierson & F. G. Castles (Eds.), *Welfare state readers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 389-407). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity.
- Boshier, P. (May, 29, 2009) [Author] *Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Annual Conference "The Child's Voice in Process: Which Way is Forward"* A New Zealand Perspective [White paper]. Retrieved April 18, 2010, from:  
<http://www.justice.govt.nz/courts/family-court/documents/publications/speeches/Speech-of-the-Principal-Family-Court-Judge.pdf>.
- Bradbury, M. (2016, September, 4). *Why are beneficiaries attacking WINZ offices?* The Daily Blog. Retrieved from: <http://thedailyblog.co.nz/2014/09/04/why-are-beneficiaries-attacking-winz-offices/>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* (3)1, . 77-101.
- Braye, S., & Preseton-Shoot, M. (2002). Social work and the law. In R. Adams, L. Dominelli, & M. Payne (Eds.). *social work, themes issues and critical debates* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 62-73). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave MacMillan
- Braye, S., & Preston-Shoot, M. (2009). Social Work and the Law. In R. Adams, L. Dominelli, & M. Payne (Eds.). *Social work: Themes, issues and critical debates* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 90-102). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Breiding-Buss, H. (2000, January). Single Custodial Fathers – A Challenge for Social Services in New Zealand. *Father & Child Magazine*, 46(1), 32- (5 pages). Retrieved from: Father & Child database.

- Breiding-Buss, H., Smith, B., & Walker, P. (2011). *Dependant on dad*. Retrieved March 28, 2016 from: <http://fatherandchild.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Depending-on-Dad-Report.pdf>.
- Brickell, J. (1998). *Fathers who care: Partners in parenting. An overview of parenting programmes for fathers*. Wellington, New Zealand: Office of the Commissioner for Children.
- Brink, P. J., & Wood, M. J. (1998). *Fundamentals of research methodology for health care professionals*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Buckingham, J. (2004). *Patters of violence in intimate relationships: A critical examination of legal responses*. PhD Student, School of Law, UC: Retrieved from: [http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/10092/849/1/thesis\\_fulltext.pdf](http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/10092/849/1/thesis_fulltext.pdf).
- Buckley, C. (2013, October 25). *Gay couples, choosing today 'I don't'*. Retrieved from The New York Times: [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/style/gay-couples-choosing-to-say-i-dont.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/style/gay-couples-choosing-to-say-i-dont.html?_r=0)
- Bulmer, M. (2008). The ethics of social research. In N. Gilbert (Ed.). *Researching social life* (3rd ed.), pp. 145-161). London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Burns, N., & Grove, S. K. (1999). *Understanding nursing research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Philadelphia, PA: W.B. Saunders Company.
- Burton, L. J., Westen D., & Kowalski, R. M. (2012). *Psychology*. Milton, Queensland, Australia: John Wiley and Sons.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminist and the subversion of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Callister, P. (1995). Men and childcare - An issue for public policy? *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 5(1), 53-66.
- Callister, P. (1998). Playcentre HisStory. In S. Stover (Eds.) *Good clean fun: New Zealand's Playcentre Movement*. Auckland: Playcentre Publications, pp. 77-91.
- Campbell, K. (December 21, 2012). *Crash victims were not wearing seatbelts*. Retrieved from NZHerald Webpage: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10855525](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10855525)
- Care of Children Act 2004, No. 90. Retrieved from Brookers database.

- Carswell, S. L., Hinerangi, M., Gray, C., & Taylor, A. (October 2013). Evaluation of Family Group Conference Practice and Outcomes – Scoping Phase. Commissioned by Office of the Chief Social Worker, Child, Youth and Family Services, Wellington. Biography: Wellington, New Zealand.
- Chapman, P. (2000). *Real dads, real men: a study of fathers' experiences of child and family services in the Nelson/Tasman region and their suggestions for "father friendly services"*: Nelson Marlborough Health Services: Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology.
- Chatterjee, S., & Birks, S. (2001). *The New Zealand economy: issues and policies* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Chatterjee, S., Eichbaum, C., Harris, P., Dalziel, P., Philpott, B., Conway, P., & Shaw, R. (1999). *The New Politics: a third way for New Zealand*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Chenoweth, L., & McAuliffe, D. (2005). *The road to social work and human service practice: An introductory text*. South Melbourne, Australia: Thomson.
- Cheyne, C., O'Brien, M., & Belgrave, M. (2005). *Social policy in Aotearoa New Zealand: A critical introduction* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press.
- Child, Family Community Australia (2013). *Same-sex parented families in Australia*. CFCA Paper No. 18: Retrieved from Australian Institute of Family Studies webpage: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/same-sex-parented-families-australia/childrens-wellbeing-same-sex-parented-families>.
- Child, Youth and Family (2016). *Key statistics and information for media*. Retrieved from the Ministry of Social Development website: <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/about-us/key-statistics/>
- Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989, No. 24. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- Citizen's Advice Bureau New Zealand (2016). *What to ask us?* Retrieved from Citizen's Advice Bureau New Zealand Webpage: <http://www.cab.org.nz/Pages/home.aspx>
- Civil Union Act 2004, No. 102. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- Clapton, G. (2013). *Social work with fathers. Positive practice*. London, England: Dunedin.

- Collins, B. (2002). Defining feminist social work. *Social Work*, 31(3), 214-219.
- Connolly, M., & Harms, L. (2009). *Social work: contexts and practice*. South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Oxford University Press.
- Constantine, E. (2011, January 15). Overseas tourists' ACC claims \$1m. *Otago Daily Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/national/144337/overseas-tourists-acc-claims-1m>.
- Crombie, N. (2007, June 14). Beyer seeks second shot as Carterton Mayor. *Wairarapa Times-Age*. Retrieved from <http://www.times-age.co.nz/local/news/beyer-seeks-second-shot-as-carterton-mayor/3737989/>
- Daily Mail (2016, September 26). Same-sex couples are better parents, study claims. Retrieved from NZherald webpage: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=6&objectid=1171684](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=1171684)
- 2.Dale, V. (2013). *Child poverty action group. Myths and facts: Sole parents and the DPB*. Retrieved from Child Poverty Action Group website: <http://www.cpag.org.nz/assets/Backgrounders/130402%20CPAG%20Myths%20and%20Facts.pdf>.
- Dalziel, L. (2009). *Don't amend adoption act 1955 – scrap it and start again*. Retrieved September 24, 2012, from New Zealand Labour website: <http://blog.labour.org.nz/index.php/2009/08/20/dont-amend-adoption-act-1955-scrap-it-and-start-again/>
- Dane, F. C. (1990). *Research methods*. California, MA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Davey (1999). Perspectives on father II issue paper No. 6. Edited by Stuart Birks and Paul Callister. Wellington, New Zealand
- Davidson, C., & Palmer, C. (2009). *Supporting kiwi dads*. Wellington, New Zealand. Families Commission.
- Davies, G. (n.d.). *Free bible studies*. Retrieved September 23, 2014, from 3xpure website: <http://www.free-bible-study-lessons.com/husband.html>.
- Davies, L. (2016, July 6). WINZ 'put comfort over safety', Worksafe says. Retrieved from One News website: <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/winz-put-comfort-over-safety-worksafe-says>.

- Davies, M. (2016). *Social worker: CYF changes not enough*. Newshub. Retrieved from: <http://www.newshub.co.nz/nznews/social-worker-cyf-changes-not-enough-2016040718#axzz4CXZIU5X4>.
- DepressionD (2013). Sociopath – sociopathic personality disorder. Retrieved from: DepressionD website: <http://depressiond.com/sociopath-sociopathic-personality-disorder/3/>
- Dictionary.com (2013). Buggery. Retrieved from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/buggery?s=t&id=1135>.
- DiNova, C. (n.d.). Does the bible condemn homosexuality? *The Turning Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://christiangays.com/articles/dinovo.shtml>.
- Dlamini, C. R. M. (2002). The Clash Between Customary Law and Universal Human Rights. *Speculum Juris*, 16(2), 228-239.
- Dominelli, L. (2002). *Feminist social work theory and practice*. New York: Palgrave.
- Dougan, P. (2015). Auckland among world's most gay-friendly cities. Retrieved January 1, 2016 from NZHerald Webpage: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=6&objectid=1145927](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=1145927) 1.
- Duncan, G. (2007). *Social politics: New Zealand social policy* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Auckland, New Zealand: Person Education.
- Dunedin Community Law (2005). *Fatherhood: a legal information booklet for men regarding pregnancy and birth*. Dunedin, New Zealand: Author.
- Dunn, J. (2015). *Queer Parenting: Non-traditional parenting styles and their impacts on childhood bullying* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Idaho State University.
- Ellison, N. (2007). Beyond universalism and particularism: Rethinking contemporary welfare theory. In C. Pierson & F. G. Castles (Eds.), *Welfare state readers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 408-429). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity.

- Ellison, N. (2008). Neo-Liberalism. In P. Alcock, M. May, & K. Rowlingson (Eds.), *The students companion to social policy* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 67-95). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Epsing-Anderson, G. (2007). A welfare state for the twenty-first century. In C. Pierson & F. G. Castles (Eds.), *Welfare state readers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 434-454). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity.
- EQC (2015). *Canterbury home repair programme*. Retrieved from EQC Website: <http://www.eqc.govt.nz/canterbury-earthquakes/home-repair-process/chrp>
- Falck, C. (2015). *Modernising Child, Youth and Family*. (Interim report 31 July 2015 – Version 1.0). Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Social Development.
- Family First (2015). *Same-sex Parenting: unpacking the social science*. Retrieved from Family First New Zealand webpage: <https://www.familyfirst.org.nz/2015/02/same-sex-parenting-unpacking-the-social-science/>
- Family Law (2016). *New family justice system*. Retrieved from Family Law Section Website: <http://www.familylaw.org.nz/>
- Fertility Associates. (2016). *Public funding and eligibility*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fertilityassociates.co.nz/treatment-costs-and-payment-options/public-funding-and-eligibility/>
- Fielding, J. (2008). The ethics of social research. In N. Gilbert (Eds.). *Researching social life* (3rd ed., pp. 323-352). London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Fielding, J., & Thomas, H. (2008). The ethics of social research. In N. Gilbert (Eds.). *Researching social life* (3rd ed., pp. 245-284). London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Fileborn, B. (2012). Sexual violence and gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer communities. *Australian Institute of Family Studies* (1)3.
- Focus on the Family (2009). *Adoption - cause for concern*. Retrieved July 18, 2014, from New Zealand Focus on the Family website: <http://www.focus.org.nz/default.aspx?go=article&aid=574>



- Ford, E. (2016, July 18). *Beneficiary offered house after year in van*. Retrieved from Stuff webpage: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/82140960/beneficiary-offered-house-after-year-in-van>.
- Fursman, L., & Callister, P. (2009). *Men's participation in unpaid care: A review of the literature*. Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Labour.
- Gaduh, A. (2012). Religion, social interactions, and cooperative attitudes: Evidence from Indonesia. Retrieved, January 3, 2015 from: [http://web.stanford.edu/dept/islamic\\_studies/cgi-bin/web/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/gaduh.pdf](http://web.stanford.edu/dept/islamic_studies/cgi-bin/web/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/gaduh.pdf).
- Gage, J., Kirk, R., & Hornblow, A. (2009). *Heart and Head: Explanation of the meaning of fatherhood*. (Report No, 31/09). Wellington, New Zealand: Families Commission.
- Gage, J., Kirk, R., & Hornblow, A. (2010). *Heart and Head: A Theoretical Explanation of the Meaning and Construction of Fatherhood for 'At Risk' Men in New Zealand*. Cambridge. Retrieved January 10, 2012 from Families Commission website: <http://www.familiescommission.org.nz/sites/default/files/downloads/heart-and-head.pdf>.
- Galley, D., & Parrish, M. (2014, 25 July). *Why are there so few male social workers?* The Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2014/jul/25/why-so-few-male-social-workers>
- Galley, D., & Parrish, M. (July, 2014). *Why are there so few male social workers?* Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2014/jul/25/why-so-few-male-social-workers>.
- Ganahl, J. (2015). *Single dads in the movies: A slideshow tribute to our favourites*. Retrieved from Singewith webpage: <http://singlewith.com/2013/03/single-dads-in-the-movies/>
- Garcia, K. P. (2016, February 10). *Beneficiaries are being monitored on social media*. Radio New Zealand: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/296151/beneficiaries-being-monitored-online>.



- Gay and Lesbian Rights (n.d.). In *The Free Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Gay+and+Lesbian+Rights>.
- Gergen, K. J. (2001). *Social construction in context*. London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Gibson, M. (2010). *Income and occupational Intergenerational mobility in New Zealand*. (Paper No: 10/06). Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Treasury.
- Giddens, A. (1998). *The Third Way: The renewal of Social Democracy*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (2001). *Sociology*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Blackwell Publications.
- Giddens, A. (2007). Positive welfare. In C. Pierson & F. G. Castles (Eds.), *Welfare state readers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 378-388). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity.
- Goedert, J. J., (2000). The epidemiology of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome malignancies. *Semin Oncol* (1)27, 390–401.
- Grief, J. B. (2010). Fathers, children, and joint custody. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 49(2), 311–319.
- Haarman, C. (2000). *Social assistance in South Africa: Its potential impact on poverty* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of the Western Cape. Cape Town, South Africa.
- HealthLink (2016). *Certainty in care*. Retrieved from Health Link Webpage: [http://www.healthlink.net/en\\_AU/services/hl-clinical/](http://www.healthlink.net/en_AU/services/hl-clinical/)
- Henrickson, M. (2005). Lavender parents. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 26(1), 68-83.
- Herewini, T. H. M. (2007). He Pōriro – Born out of Wedlock! In J. Hutchings and C. Aspin (Eds). *Sexuality and the Stories of Indigenous People*. Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers.
- Hetherington, C. (2003). Divorce and Remarriage. In S. S. Luthar (Eds.). *Resilience and Vulnerability. Adaption n the content of childhood adversities* (pp. 191-257). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hide, R. (2012, August 5). Wed for better, not worse. *NZ Herald*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nzherald.co.nz>.
- Hobbs, G. F., Hobbs, C. J., & Wynne, J. M. (1999). Abuse of children in foster and residential care. *Child Abuse & Neglect* (32) 12, pp 1239-1252.

- Hodkinson, P. (2008). Designing Samples. In N. Gilbert (Eds.). *Researching social life* (3rd ed., pp. 80-100). London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Human Rights Act 1993, No. 82. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- Human Rights Commission (2010). *Human rights in New Zealand 2010*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
- Hume, J. (2014). *Small Town NZ Bigotry*. Retrieved December 31, 2015 from LiveNews Breaking News 24/7 Webpage: <http://thedailyblog.co.nz/2014/06/09/small-town-nz-bigotry>.
- IVFAustralia (2015). *IVF treatment*. Retrieved from Virtus Health website: <http://www.ivf.com.au/fertility-treatment/ivf-treatment>.
- Jagose, A. R. (1996). *Queer theory: An introduction*. New York, NY: University Press.
- Jeffries, S. (2001). *Gender judgements: An investigation of gender differentiation in sentencing and remand in New Zealand*. (PhD Degree) Department of Sociology, University of Canterbury. Retrieved from: [http://r.search.yahoo.com/\\_ylt=AwrSbml0TMhTfkAAeNDzZgx.;\\_ylu=X3oDMTByaDNhc2JxBHNiYwNzcgRwb3MDMQRjb2xvA2dxMQR2dGlkAw--/RV=2/RE=1405664436/RO=10/RU=http%3a%2f%2fir.canterbury.ac.nz%2fbitstream%2f10092%2f4629%2f1%2fjeffries\\_thesis.pdf/RK=0/RS=ecX3OUK4oGI\\_wm72rtPdfhkuFSw-](http://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=AwrSbml0TMhTfkAAeNDzZgx.;_ylu=X3oDMTByaDNhc2JxBHNiYwNzcgRwb3MDMQRjb2xvA2dxMQR2dGlkAw--/RV=2/RE=1405664436/RO=10/RU=http%3a%2f%2fir.canterbury.ac.nz%2fbitstream%2f10092%2f4629%2f1%2fjeffries_thesis.pdf/RK=0/RS=ecX3OUK4oGI_wm72rtPdfhkuFSw-)
- Jeffries, S. (2001). *Gender judgments: An investigation of gender differentiation in sentencing and remand in New Zealand* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Johnson, R., & Waterfield, J. (2004). Making words count: the value of qualitative research. *Physiotherapy Research International*, 9(3), 121-136.
- Jones, N. (2015, September 17). *Back-to-work programme labelled a fail*. NZ Herald. Retrieved from: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/winz/news/article.cfm?o\\_id=247&objectid=11514141](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/winz/news/article.cfm?o_id=247&objectid=11514141)
- Jordan, B. (2001). Tough Love: Social work, social exclusion and the third way. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31(4), 527-546.
- Jorge C., Armesto, J. C., & Shapiro, E. R. (2011). Adoptive Gay Fathers: Transformations of the Masculine Homosexual Self. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 7(1), 72-92.

- Julian, R. (1998). *Fathers who care: Partners in parenting – Focus on fathers*. Wellington, New Zealand: Office of the Commissioner for Children.
- Kay, M. (2011, February, 25). Census cancelled due to the quake. *National News*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuff.co.nz/>
- Kelly, J. (2000). Children's adjustment in conflicted marriage and divorce: A decade review of research. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 39 (8), 963-973.
- Kenny, K., & Walters, L. (October, 2016). *Who names the Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki?* Retrieved from Stuff Webpage: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/faces-of-innocents/85577096/Who-named-the-Ministry-for-Vulnerable-Children-Oranga-Tamariki>.
- Khanlou, N., Haque, N., Sheehan, S., & Jones, G. (2014). "It is an Issue of not Knowing Where to Go": Service Providers' Perspectives on Challenges in Accessing Social Support and Services by Immigrant Mothers of Children with Disabilities. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*. 17(6), 1840-1847.
- Kirsch, M. H. (2000). *Queer theory and social change*. New York: Routledge 2000.
- Laimputtong, P. (2007). *Researching the vulnerable*. London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Lamb, M. E. (2013). The Changing Faces of Fatherhood and Father-Child Relationships from Fatherhood as Ztatus to Father as Dad. In M. A. Fine & F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Handbook of Family Theories. A Content-Based Approach* (pp. 87-102). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Lawrence, M. (2004). *Legal studies: A first book on New Zealand Law* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Leavell, A. S., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. S. (2013). Parenting in Infancy and Early Childhood. In M. A. Fine & F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Handbook of Family Theories. A Content-Based Approach* (pp. 11-27). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Leslie, D. (2016, July 29). *Push for compulsory social worker registry*. RNZ. Retrieved from: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/309683/push-for-compulsory-social-worker-registry>.

- Levant, R. F. (1980, July). *A male perspective on parenting and non-parenting*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Congress of Psychology. Leipzig, Germany.
- Lindeggar, G. (2006). The Father in Mind. In L. Richter & R. Morrell (Eds.). *BABA: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 121-131). Cape Town, South Africa: Blue Weaver.
- Lister, R. (2007). Investing in the citizen-workers of the future: transformations in citizenship and the state under new labour. In C. Pierson & F. G. Castles (Eds.), *Welfare state readers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 455-467). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity.
- Locke, K. A. (2005). The Bible on Homosexuality. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 48(2), 125-156.
- Lowe, D. (2015). *Karl Marx's conception of alienation*. Retrieved from 100 word website: <https://1000wordphilosophy.wordpress.com/2015/05/13/karl-marxs-conception-of-alienation/>
- MacLennan, C. (2016). *Submission on the social security legislation rewrite bill*. Auckland, New Zealand: Child Poverty Action Group.
- Marsiglio, W, Day, R. D., & Lamb, M. E. (2000). Exploring fatherhood diversity: Implications for conceptualizing father involvement. *Marriage & Family Review*, 29(4), 239-293.
- May, T. (2001). *Social research: issues, methods and process* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open University Press.
- May, T. (2001). *Social research: issues, methods and process* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open University Press.
- McDonald, M., & Webb, D. (2006). *The New Zealand legal system: structures and processes*. Wellington, New Zealand: Lexis Nexis New Zealand Ltd.
- McGill, B. (2011). Navigating New Norms of Involved Fatherhood: Employment, Fathering Attitudes, and Father Involvement *Journal of Family Issues June 2014* 35: 1089-1106.
- McLennan, G., Ryan, A., & Spoonley, P. (2004). *Exploring society: Sociology for New Zealand students* (2nd ed.). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson Education New Zealand.

- Meads, H. M. (2003). *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values*. Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers.
- Medical dictionary (2013). *Ego-dystonic homosexuality*. Retrieved from Dictionary.com.
- Menz (2001, April-May). Masculinist Evolution New Zealand: Promoting a clearer understanding of men's experience. *MENZ Issues* 6(3). Retrieved from: Menz Organisation: <http://menz.org.nz/menz-issues/april-may-2001/>
- Meyer, D. R., & Garasky, S. (1991). United States Department of Health and Human Services. *Custodial fathers: myths, realities, and child support policy* 42(1), 202-245.
- Meyer, N. (Director). (1982). *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.
- Midgley, S. (1998, June. 26). Third way: a challenge for all in education; Blair's vision; interview; Kevin Mc Neany; Peter Smith. *TES Connect*. Retrieved from: <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=301139>.
- Miller, B. (1979). Gay fathers and their children. *The Family Coordinator*, 28(4), 544-552.
- Ministry of Justice (2007). *Introduction to the domestic violence act: Information about protection orders and the domestic violence act*. Retrieved from: <http://www.justice.govt.nz/courts/family-court/documents/pdf-pamphlets/Courts001-Jul07.pdf>.
- Ministry of Justice (2009). *Applying to a Protection Order: Information for people applying for protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act*. [Pamphlet]. N.p.: Author.
- Ministry of Social Development (2011). *What does Whānau Ora mean?* Retrieved April 10, 2011, from Ministry of social Development website: <http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/initiatives/whanau-ora/frequently-asked-questions.html>.
- Ministry of Social Development (2016a). *A home for life* [Brochure]. New Zealand: Author.
- Ministry of Social Development (2016b). *Better Public Services*. Retrieved from Ministry of Social Development website: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/better-public-services/index.html>.

- Ministry of Social Development (2016c). *Relocation from Auckland Assistance*. Retrieved from Ministry of Social Development Website:  
<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/relocation-from-auckland-assistance.html>.
- Ministry of Social Development (2016d). *Social Work at Ministry of Social Development*. Retrieved from Ministry of Social Development Website:  
<https://jobs.msd.govt.nz/search/?q=social+work&locationsearch=>
- Ministry of Social Development (2016e). *Obligations to look for work and prepare for work*. Retrieved from Work and Income Webpage:  
<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/work-obligations/#null>.
- Ministry of Social Development (2016f). *Child offenders*. Retrieved from Child, Youth and Family Webpage: <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/youth-justice/child-offenders.html>.
- Ministry of Social Development (2017). *My MSD*. Retrieved from Ministry of Social Development website: <https://my.msd.govt.nz/>
- Mitchell, D., & Chapman, P. (2009). *Pathways through parental separation: the experiences of a group of non-resident fathers*. Wellington, New Zealand: Families Commission.
- Mitchell, D., Chapman, P., & McIntosh, C. (2001). *A study of fathers' experiences of child and family services in the Nelson/Tasman region and their suggestions for "father friendly services"*. Retrieved July 18, 2014 from:  
<http://fatherhoodfoundation.org.nz/research/fathers-experiences-of-child-and-family-services-summary.htm>.
- Morrell, R., & Richter, L. (2006). Introduction. In Richter & R. Morrell (Eds.). *BABA: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 1-12). Cape Town, South Africa: Blue Weaver.
- Moses, A. (2011, June 21). Our sexual desires exposed by neuroscientists' porn study. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/our-sexual-desires-exposed-by-neuroscientists-porn-study-20110621-1gcol.html#ixzz1PtO5g7AO>.

- Murphy, C., Paton, N., Gulliver, P., & Fanslow, J. (2013). *Policy and practice implications: Child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and parenting*. Auckland, New Zealand: New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, The University of Auckland.
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (2015). *Grooming at a glance*. Retrieved from National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/grooming/>
- Nelson Mail (2007). *Family violence risk for those on benefits*. Retrieved from Fairfax media webpage: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/nelson-mail/news/22028/Family-violence-risk-for-those-on-benefits>.
- Nelson, P. (2013). *Do we need to revisit maternal preference where the Father has been Violent to the Mother: Children's experiences of post-separation fathering*. Retrieved July 18, 2014 from Victoria University website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs/study/student-profiles/sociology>
- Nes, J. A., & Iadicola, P. (1989). Toward a Definition of Feminist Social Work: A Comparison of Liberal, Radical, and Socialist Models. *Social Work, 34*(1), 12-21.
- Neuman, W. L. (1997). *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Becon Publications.
- New York City Bar (2015). *Infliction of Emotional Distress*. Retrieved November 10, 2015 from Legal Referral Website: <http://www.nycbar.org/get-legal-help/article/personal-injury-and-accidents/infliction-emotional-distress/>
- New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, No. 109. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- New Zealand Daily News (8 October, 2015). *Suicide statistics higher than ever before*. Retrieved from Gaynz.com website: [http://www.gaynz.com/articles/publish/2/article\\_17398.php](http://www.gaynz.com/articles/publish/2/article_17398.php)
- New Zealand Herald (2016). *Heat on Destiny Church as charities services assesses tax-free status*. Retrieved from NZherald webpage: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=11754926](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11754926)
- New Zealand History (2008a). *Criminal Code against homosexuals, 1893*. Retrieved July



- 5, 2015, from New Zealand History website:  
<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/criminal-code-1893>.
- New Zealand History (2008b). *Homosexual law reform in New Zealand*. Retrieved July 8, 2015, from New Zealand History website:  
<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/homosexual-law-reform/homosexual-law-reform>.
- New Zealand Law Commission (2016). *Donor gamete conception*. Retrieved from the Law Commission website: [http://www.nzlii.org/nz/other/nzlc/pp/PP54/PP54-3\\_.html](http://www.nzlii.org/nz/other/nzlc/pp/PP54/PP54-3_.html)
- New Zealand Ministry of Justice (2006). *Introduction to the Youth Court*. Retrieved May 5, 2010 from <http://www2.justice.govt.nz/youth/about-youth/default.asp>.
- New Zealand Parliament (2016). *Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Advocacy, Workforce, and Age Settings) Amendment Bill*. Retrieved from New Zealand government website: [https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/OODBHOH\\_BILL69214\\_1/children-young-persons-and-their-families-advocacy](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/OODBHOH_BILL69214_1/children-young-persons-and-their-families-advocacy).
- News Talk ZB. (2009). *Gay adoption ban "positive discrimination"*. Retrieved August 28, 2012, from News Talk ZB webpage:  
<http://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/newsdetail1.asp?storyID=161846>
- NewsHub (2014, January 13). *Father faces dilemma over schools bible classes*. Retrieved from 3News webpage: <http://www.newshub.co.nz/nznews/father-faces-dilemma-over-schools-bible-classes-2014011412>.
- Norrie, K. (2011). *National report: New Zealand*:  
<http://www.wcl.american.edu/journal/genderlaw/19/19.1.NewZealand.JCI.pdf>.
- O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Orlikowski, W. J., & Baroudi, J. J. (1991). Studying Information Technology in Organizations: Research Approaches and Assumptions. *Information Systems Research* (2)1, 1-28.
- Palkovitz, R. (2002). *Involved fathering and children development: Advancing our understanding of good fathering*. New York, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Incorporated Publishers.



- Parker, W. (2016). *Balancing the styles of fathers and mothers*. Retrieved from: <http://fatherhood.about.com/od/strengtheningrelationships/a/Balancing-Parenting-Styles.htm>.
- Perz, J. L. (2001). *The roles of a father: Ephesians 6:4*. Retrieved from the Expository files webpage: <http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-ephesians-6-4.htm>.
- Pettitt, D. (2000). *Fathers and anti-male bias in the Family Court*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University.
- Pierson, C., & Castles, F. G. (2006). The futures of welfare. In C. Pierson & F. G. Castles (Eds.), *Welfare state readers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 375-376). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity.
- Pierson, C., & Castles, F. G. (2007). Positive welfare. In C. Pierson & F. G. Castles (Eds.), *Welfare state readers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 375-376). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity.
- Polit, D. F., & Hungler, B. P. (1997). *Nursing research: principles and methods*. Philadelphia: JB Lippincott.
- Polit, D. F., & Hungler, B. P. (2001). *Essentials of nursing research: methods, appraisal and utilization*. Philadelphia, PA: JB Lippincott.
- Privacy Act 1993, No. 28. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- Property Act 1976, No. 166. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- Punch, K. (2006). *Developing effective research proposals* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London, United Kingdom: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Radio New Zealand News (2011). Teen Girls Becoming More Violent, Study Shows [Audio]. *Interview with Donna Swfit*. Retrieved from Radio New Zealand Webpage: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/81824/teen-girls-becoming-more-violent,-study-shows>.
- Rebstock, P. (2015). *Modernising Child, Youth and Family (Final Report)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.scribd.com/doc/307258050/Final-Report-into-Child-Youth-and-Family>.
- Reece, M., Herbenick, D., Schick, V., Sanders, S. A., Dodge, B., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2010). Background and Considerations on the National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior (NSSHB) from the Investigators. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* 7(5), 243–373.

- Referendum (2011). *About the five voting systems*. Retrieved August 12, 2014, from New Zealand Referendum webpage: <http://www.referendum.org.nz/votingsystems>.
- Reid, C., Greaves, L., & Poole, N. (2008). The treatment views and recommendations of substance abusing women. *A meta-synthesis Qualitative Social Work*, 12(1), 473-489.
- Religious Facts (2015, November 19). *Homosexuality in the worlds religion*. Retrieved from ReligionFacts webpage: <http://www.religionfacts.com/homosexuality>
- Rith, K. A., & Diamond, L. M. (2013). Same-sex relationships. In M. A. Fine & F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Handbook of Family Theories. A Content-Based Approach* (pp. 123-144). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Robinson, S. (2015, May 18). *Beneficiaries 'scared stiff' of Work and Income*. The Press. Retrieved from: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/68162272/beneficiaries-scared-stiff-of-work-and-income>.
- Roche, J. (2001). Social work values and the law. In L. Cull, & J. Roche (Eds.). (2001). *The law and social work: Contemporary issues for practice* (pp. 11-19). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Ross, A. (September, 2016). *Social workers to government: Don't destroy all our hard work*. Retrieved from New Zealand Public Association website: <https://www.psa.org.nz/media/releases/social-workers-to-government-dont-destroy-all-our-hard-work/>
- Roy, E. A. (September 15, 2016). *New Zealand's serious sperm shortage: 'It has become a continuous drought'*. Retrieved from the Guardian Webpage: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/15/new-zealands-serious-sperm-shortage-it-has-become-a-continuous-drought>.
- Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2010). *Essential research methods for social work* (2nd ed.). California, USA: Brookes/Cole.
- Rutherford, D. (2016, March 17). *Statement to the UN Human Rights Committee*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrc.co.nz/news/david-rutherfords-statement-un-human-rights-committee/>

- Saks, M., & Allsop, J. (2007). *Researching health: qualitative, quantitative and mixed models*. Los Angeles: Sage Publication.
- Saphira, M., & Olivier, P. (2002). A Review of Literature On Child Prostitution. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 19(1), 141-163.
- Scragg, R. (2005). *New Zealand's legal system: the principles of legal methods*. South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Oxford University Press.
- Senft, T. (2001). *Third Wave Feminism: 1983-today*. Retrieved August 3, 2014, from Live Journal website: <http://www.livejournal.com/talkread.bml?itemid=9827282>
- Simmons, R. (2008). The ethics of social research. In N. Gilbert (Eds.). *Researching social life* (3rd ed., pp. 182-225). London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Šmídová, I. (2007). *Fatherhood as a social construction: Mapping the challenges to promoting good fatherhood*. Retrieved from European fatherhood website: <http://www.european-fatherhood.com/knowledge.php?mode=print&id=70>
- Smith, A. L. (2001). *Taranaki waiata tangi and feelings for place* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from: <http://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/dspace/handle/10182/2137>.
- Social Workers Registration Board (2008). *Code of conduct guidelines for social workers*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
- Spitzer, R. L. (1974). Homosexuality and sexual orientation disturbance. *The American Journal of Psychology*. 138(2), 210-215.
- Stanhope, M., & Lancaster, J. (2009). Public Health Nursing: Population-Centered Health Care in the Community. *American Journal of Nursing*, 109(1), 80-121.
- Stanley, T., & Kelly, S. (2008). Practice notes: sociology analysis for social work: a teaching and practice toolkit. *Aotearoa New Zealand social work: review*. 19(2), 51-57.
- Starr, B. (2016). The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism by Max Weber *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia*.
- Statistics New Zealand (2007). *Report of the review of official family statistics*. Wellington, New Zealand: author.
- Statistics New Zealand (2011). *Estimated population of New Zealand*. Received November 16, 2015, from New Zealand Statistics webpage: [http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools\\_and\\_services/tools/population\\_clock.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/tools/population_clock.aspx)

- Statistics New Zealand (2014a). *Estimated population of New Zealand*. Received July 18, 2014, from New Zealand Statistics webpage:  
[http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools\\_and\\_services/tools/population\\_clock.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/tools/population_clock.aspx).
- Statistics New Zealand (2014b). Measuring the gender pay gap. Retrieved from Statistics New Zealand Webpage: [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/income-and-work/income/gender-pay-gap.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/income-and-work/income/gender-pay-gap.aspx).
- Sturgis, P. (2008). Designing Samples. In N. Gilbert (Eds.). *Researching social life* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 165-181). London, England: SAGE Publications.
- TE ATA (2016). *Sexual diversity in contemporary Māori society*. Retrieved March 28, 2016, from: *Story: Hōkakatanga – Māori sexualities* website:  
<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/hokakatanga-maori-sexualities/page-3>.
- Te Awēkotuku, Ngahuia (2005). He Reka Anō – same-sex lust and loving in the ancient Māori world. In A. J. Laurie & L. Evans (Eds). *Outlines: Lesbian & Gay histories of Aotearoa*. Wellington, New Zealand: LAGANZ.
- The Department of Internal Affairs (2015). *Marriage Amendment Act – Questions and Answers*. [http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg\\_URL/Services-Births-Deaths-and-Marriages-Marriage-Amendment-Act-Questions-and-Answers](http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Services-Births-Deaths-and-Marriages-Marriage-Amendment-Act-Questions-and-Answers)
- The Human Rights Act 1993, No. 82. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- The Law Commission (1999). *Adoption: Options for reform*. (Preliminary Paper 38). Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
- The Marriage Act 1995, No. 92. Retrieved from Brookers database.
- The White Paper for Vulnerable Children (2012). *The White Paper for Vulnerable Children Volume 1*. Retrieved from Children's Action Plan Website:  
<http://childrensactionplan.govt.nz/resources/white-paper-for-vulnerable-children-2012/>
- Tolley, A. (2016). *Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Advocacy, Workforce, and Age Settings) Amendment Bill*. Retrieved from New Zealand government website:  
[https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/00DBHOH\\_BILL69214\\_1/children-young-persons-and-their-families-advocacy](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/00DBHOH_BILL69214_1/children-young-persons-and-their-families-advocacy).

- Trevett, C. (2005, June 25). Destiny DVD gets past censor. *New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved from: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=103326](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=103326)
- TripleP (2015). *About Triple P centre*. Retrieved from Triple P Website: <http://www.triplecentre.net.nz/>
- Tuazon-McCheyne, J. (2010). Two Dads: Gay Male Parenting and its Politicisation — A Cooperative Inquiry Action Research Study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 31, 311-323.
- Twin, T. (2011). *The Role of the Non-Custodial Fathers in Children's Emotional Development*. *StudyMode.com*. Retrieved from: <http://www.studymode.com/essay/The-Role-Of-The-Non-Custodial-Fathers-862919.html>.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2011). *Preamble*. Retrieved from the United Nations webpage: [http://www.hrcr.org/docs/universal\\_decl.html](http://www.hrcr.org/docs/universal_decl.html)
- Van Beynert, M. (July, 2016). *Frontline social workers are nearly all female: Men need to step up*. Retrieved from Stuff Webpage: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/82369034/nz-frontline-social-workers-are-nearly-all-female-men-need-to-step-up>
- von Dadelszen, P. (2009, August). *A new adoption act for the new millennium*. Paper presented at the Roy McKenzie Centre at Wellington, New Zealand.
- Vulnerable Children's Act 2014. Retrieved from Brookers online.
- Warde, B. (2009). Why Social Work, and What does the Future Hold?: The Narratives of Recently Graduated Hispanic and African-American Male BSW and MSW Students. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 18, 129–145.
- Weir, D. H. (2002). *An odyssey of sexual/gender evolution: An autoethnographical study of the United States from the 1950's to the present* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from: <http://www.esextherapy.com/dissertations/Weir%20dissertation%202002> [1].pdf
- Wichel, D. (2011, April 6). Gay dads no longer a queer idea. *NZ Herald*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nzherald.co.nz>.
- Wichtel, D. (2011, April 6). Gay dads no longer a queer idea. *NZ Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.nzherald.co.nz>.

- Williams, S. (2008). What is fatherhood? Searching for the reflexive father. *Sociology* (42)3, 487-502.
- Wills, C. (2007). The Lesbian Family and the State: A Socio Logical Perspective on New Zealand's Regulation of Lesbian Sexuality. *New Zealand Sociology*, 22(2), 112-124.
- Wood, G., & Rudd, C. (2004). *The politics and government of New Zealand*. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press.
- Work and Income (2015). *Jobseeker Support - Sole Parent - deduction tables*. Retrieved from Work and Income Webpage: <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/tell-us/income/wages/deduction-tables/jobseeker-support-sole-parent.html>.
- Work and Income New Zealand (2016a). *Benefit rates*. Retrieved from Work and Income Webpage: <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/benefit-rates/benefit-rates-april-2016.html#null>.
- Work and Income New Zealand (2016b). *Report a suspect fraud*. Retrieved from the Ministry of Social Developments website: <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/report-suspected-fraud/>
- Wynd, D. (2012). *Child abuse: what role does poverty play?* Wellington, New Zealand: *Child Poverty Action Group Inc.*
- Young, A. (2015). *Child, Youth and Family to get complete overhaul*. New Zealand Herald. Retrieved from: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=11426442](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11426442).



**SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE TO  
DETERMINE THE APPROVAL  
PROCEDURE**

*(Part A and Part B of this questionnaire must both be completed)*

Name: Jason Edward Rushton (11269494)

Project Title: Sole fathers experiences of accessing social services.

This questionnaire should be completed following, or as part of, the discussion of ethical issues.

Part A

The statements below are being used to determine the risk of your project causing physical or psychological harm to participants and whether the nature of the harm is minimal and no more than is normally encountered in daily life. The degree of risk will then be used to determine the appropriate approval procedure.

If you are in any doubt you are encouraged to submit an application to one of the University’s ethics committees.

Does your Project involve any of the following?

*(Please answer all questions. Please circle either YES or NO for each question)*

Risk of Harm

1. Situations in which the researcher may be at risk of harm.	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input checked="" type="radio"/>
2. Use of questionnaire or interview, whether or not it is anonymous which might reasonably be expected to cause discomfort, embarrassment, or psychological or spiritual harm to the participants.	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
3. Processes that are potentially disadvantageous to a person or group, such as the collection of information which may expose the person/group to discrimination.	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input checked="" type="radio"/>
4. Collection of information of illegal behaviour(s) gained during the research which could place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, professional or personal relationships.	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input checked="" type="radio"/>
5. Collection of blood, body fluid, tissue samples, or other samples.	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input checked="" type="radio"/>

6. Any form of exercise regime, physical examination, deprivation (e.g. sleep, dietary).	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
7. The administration of any form of drug, medicine (other than in the course of standard medical procedure), placebo.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Physical pain, beyond mild discomfort.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Any Massey University teaching which involves the participation of Massey University students for the demonstration of procedures or phenomena which have a potential for harm.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

#### Informed and Voluntary Consent

10. Participants whose identity is known to the researcher giving oral consent rather than written consent (if participants are anonymous you may answer No).	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Participants who are unable to give informed consent.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Research on your own students/pupils.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
13. The participation of children (seven (7) years old or younger).	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
14. The participation of children under sixteen (16) years old where active parental consent is not being sought.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
15. Participants who are in a dependent situation, such as those who are under custodial care, or residents of a hospital, nursing home or prison or patients highly dependent on medical care.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
16. Participants who are vulnerable.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
17. The use of previously collected identifiable personal information or research data for which there was no explicit consent for this research.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
18. The use of previously collected biological samples for which there was no explicit consent for this research.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

#### Privacy/Confidentiality Issue

19. Any evaluation of organisational services or practices where information of a personal nature may be collected and where participants or the organisation may be identified.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--

#### Deception

---



20. Deception of the participants, including concealment and covert observations.	YES <b>NO</b>
---	---------------

#### Conflict of Interest

21. Conflict of interest situation for the researcher (e.g. is the researcher also the lecturer/teacher/treatment-provider/colleague or employer of the research participants or is there any other power relationship between the researcher and research participants?)	YES <b>NO</b>
---	---------------

#### Compensation to Participants

22. Payments or other financial inducements (other than reasonable reimbursement of travel expenses or time) to participants.	YES <b>NO</b>
---	---------------

#### Procedural

23. A requirement by an outside organisation (e.g. a funding organisation or a journal in which you wish to publish) for Massey University Human Ethics Committee approval.	YES <b>NO</b>
---	---------------

#### Part B

##### FOR PROPOSED HEALTH AND DISABILITY RESEARCH ONLY

Not all health and disability research requires review by a Health and Disability Ethics Committee (HDEC).

Your study is likely to require HDEC review if it involves:

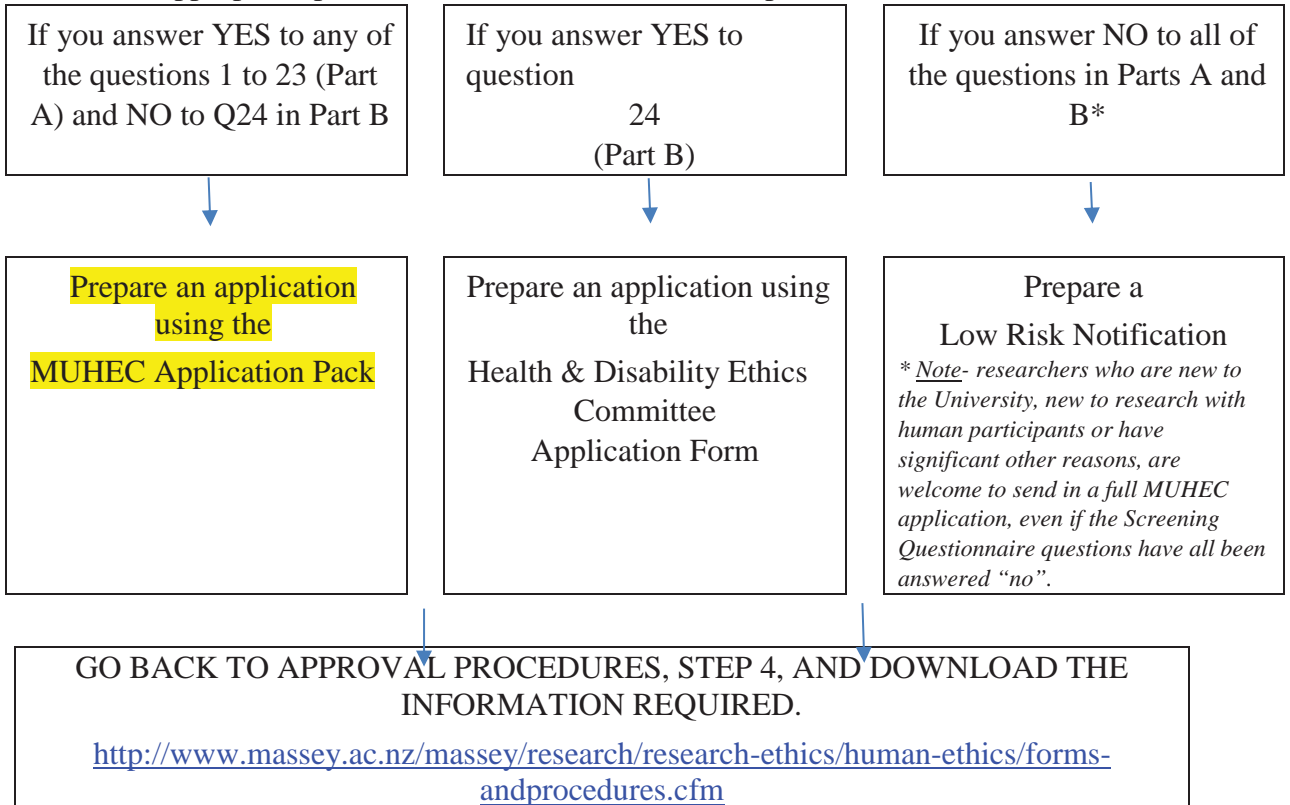
- human participants recruited in their capacity as:
  - consumers of health or disability support services; or
  - relatives or caregivers of such consumers; or
  - volunteers in clinical trials; or
- human tissue; or
- health information.
- 

In order to establish whether or not HDEC review is required: (i) read the Massey University Digest of the HDEC Scope of Review standard operating procedure; (ii) work through the 'Does your study require HDEC review?' flowchart; and (iii) answer Question 24 below.

If you are still unsure whether your project requires HDEC approval, please email the Ministry of Health for advice ([hdecs@moh.govt.nz](mailto:hdecs@moh.govt.nz)) and keep a copy of the response for your records.

24. Is HDEC review required for this study?	YES <b>NO</b>
---	---------------

Select the appropriate procedure to be used (choose one option):



**APPENDIX B**



**Massey University**

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Application No: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

*This number is assigned when your application is accepted.*

*Quote on all documentation to participants and the Committee.*

**Human Ethics Application**

**FOR APPROVAL OF PROPOSED RESEARCH/TEACHING/EVALUATION INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

*(All applications are to be typed and presented using language that is free from jargon and comprehensible to lay people)*

**SECTION A**

**1 Project Title** Sole father's experiences of accessing social services.

**Projected start date for data collection** 23 February 2015      **Projected end date** 11 November 2016

*(In no case will approval be given if recruitment and/or data collection has already begun).*

**2 Applicant Details** *(Select the appropriate box and complete details)*

**ACADEMIC STAFF APPLICATION (excluding staff who are also students)**

**Full Name of Staff Applicant/s** .....

**School/Department/Institute** .....

**Campus (mark one only)**      Albany       Palmerston North       Wellington

**Telephone** .....      **Email Address** .....

**STUDENT APPLICATION**

**Full Name of Student Applicant** Jason Edward Rushton (11269494)

**Employer (if applicable)** .....

**Telephone** .....      **Email Address** .....

**Postal Address** 20 Darroch Street, Belfast, Christchurch, 8051

**Full Name of Supervisor(s)** Dr Michael Dale and Dr Martin Sullivan

**School/Department/Institute** School of Social Work

**Campus (mark one only)**      Albany       Palmerston North       Wellington

**Telephone** [REDACTED]      **Email Address** [REDACTED]

**GENERAL STAFF APPLICATION**

**Full Name of Applicant** .....

**Section** .....

**Campus (mark one only)**      Albany       Palmerston North       Wellington

**Telephone** .....      **Email Address** .....

**Full Name of Line Manager** .....

**Section** .....

Telephone .....

Email Address .....

**3 Type of Project** (*provide detail as appropriate*)

Staff Research/Evaluation:	Student Research:	If other, please specify:
Academic Staff	Specify Qualification	MSW
General Staff	Specify Credit Value of Research	120
Evaluation	(e.g. 30, 60, 90, 120, 240, 360)	

**4 Summary of Project**

**Please outline in no more than 200 words in lay language why you have chosen this project, what you intend to do and the methods you will use.**

*(Note: All the information provided in the application is potentially available if a request is made under the Official Information Act. In the event that a request is made, the University, in the first instance, would endeavour to satisfy that request by providing this summary. Please ensure that the language used is comprehensible to all.)*

In New Zealand, there is an increase of single parents, both male and female (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), and our society has changed since the introduction of Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amended Act 1955 in 2013 as to what constitutes a family. The purpose of this research is to explore male perspectives on how gender influences sole fathers in accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand. The research topic was inspired by personal experiences of social discrepancies (legislation, religion, society's dispositions and accessing social services) for men trying to care for their children. The results will hopefully provide insight into a constitutive view of tensions around fathering, which is socially constructed, as there is minimal research done in this field on gender reversal and society's disposition towards sole fathers. The research method is qualitative; data will be gathered through individual semi-structured interviews with eight sole fathers. Interviews will be transcribed, collated, and analysed, and a report written of the findings. It is hoped that this research project will increase an understanding of sole father's perspectives when accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand. Further, it will provide a voice to part of our society that is rarely heard.

**List the Attachments to your Application**, e.g. Completed "Screening Questionnaire to Determine the Approval Procedure" (compulsory), Information Sheet/s (*indicate how many*), Translated copies of Information Sheet/s, Consent Form/s (*indicate of how many*), Translated copies of Consent Form/s, Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement, Confidentiality Agreement (*for persons other than the researcher / participants who have access to project data*), Authority for Release of Tape Transcripts, Advertisement, Health Checklist, Questionnaire, Interview Schedule, Evidence of Consultation, Letter requesting access to an institution, Letter requesting approval for use of database, Other (*please specify*).

Screening Questionnaire	(Appendix A)
Information Sheet	(Appendix C)
Consent Forms	(Appendix D)
Interview Schedule	(Appendix E)
Release of Information Form	(Appendix F)
Letter requesting access to participants	(Appendix G)
Advertisement/Script	(Appendix H)
Date Collection Process Flowchart	(Appendix I)

Applications that are incomplete or lacking the appropriate signatures will not be processed. This will mean delays for the project.

Please refer to the Human Ethics website ( <http://humanethics.massey.ac.nz> ) for details of where to submit your application and the number of copies required.

---

## SECTION B: PROJECT INFORMATION

---

### *General*

6 I/We wish the protocol to be heard in a closed meeting (Part II). Yes  No

*(If yes, state the reason in a covering letter.)*

7 Does this project have any links to previously submitted MUHEC or HDEC application(s)? Yes  No

If yes, list the MUHEC or HDEC application number/s (if assigned) and relationship/s.

8 Is approval from other Ethics Committees being sought for the project? Yes  No

If yes, list the other Ethics Committees.

9 For staff research, is the applicant the only researcher? Yes  No

If no, list the names and addresses of all members of the research team.

---

### *Project Details*

10 State concisely the aims of the project.

This research aims to explore the understanding and experiences of sole fathers accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand, by investigating ways relating to social structures that may hinder or encourage this process, and what is viewed as society's acceptable norms when single men have families. These structures will take into account the changing roles of men, in particular, fathering in today's society, and the impacts legislation have had on their fathering role.

- 
- 11 Give a brief background to the project to place it in perspective and to allow the project's significance to be assessed. (No more than 200 words in lay language)**

The research will offer information on sole father's experiences in accessing social services, and by doing so, offering insight on how social workers can engage and support sole fathers accessing supports from government and non-government agencies.

Current literature on fathering is split between heterosexual and homosexual experiences around how they parent, the impacts on their children, potential psychosocial differences between homosexual and heterosexual parenting, exclusion of fathers, impacts of violent fathers towards woman and their children, the ability of men to parent, both heterosexual and homosexual. As such, it seems important to research the experiences of sole fathers and their experiences when accessing social services in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 
- 12 Outline the research procedures to be used, including approach/procedures for collecting data. Use a flow chart if necessary.**

The proposed research is qualitative, and exploring sole fathers experiences who have accessed access social service supports from either government or non-government agencies to support their families. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted for approximately one to two hours in their homes to offer the participants to tell their story. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher, and transcripts will be sent to the participants to review and edit if necessary.

Please see Date Collection Process Flowchart (Appendix I)

- 
- 13 Where will the project be conducted? Include information about the physical location/setting.**

Interviews will be conducted at time and location convenient to participants.

- 
- 14 If the study is based overseas:**

**i) Specify which countries are involved;**

**ii) Outline how overseas country requirements (if any) have been complied with;**

**iii) Have the University's Policy & Procedures for Course Related Student Travel Overseas been met?**  
(Note: Overseas travel undertaken by students – refer to item 5.10 in the document "Additional Information" on the MUHEC website.)

N/A

- 
- 15 Describe the experience of the researcher and/or supervisor to undertake this type of project?**

The student researcher is a registered social worker with over has 20 years' experience in social work, and has undertaken several projects where the views of participants have been gathered through interviews. These experiences have provided the necessary skills to develop rapport with fathers within ethical and safe guidelines and practice in a non-judgemental and open manner. The student researcher has successfully completed 179.702, Advanced Research Methods in 2014, and has the guidance and oversight of two research supervisors who are both experienced in qualitative research.

---

**16 Describe the process that has been used to discuss and analyse the ethical issues present in this project.**

Ethical issues have been discussed with supervisors as part of thesis supervision. Drafts of this Ethics application has been reviewed by supervisors.

---

**17 Describe the intended participants.**

Sole fathers who have accessed social service supports from either government or non-government agencies.

---

**18 How many participants will be involved?**

A maximum of eight participants.

---

**What is the reason for selecting this number?** (Where relevant, attach a copy of the Statistical Justification to the application form)

As the research is qualitative, time and resource constraints limit the study to this number of participants. This number is considered adequate to provide for the depth of data collection in line with a qualitative approach as discussed during my supervision.

---

**19 Describe how potential participants will be identified and recruited?**

Due to the nature of the research, and limiting bias, two polar opposite male parenting groups have been identified for the recruitment of research participants, namely, [REDACTED] who have members throughout New Zealand. Contact will be made via Facebook for [REDACTED], and Linked [REDACTED] in the first instance to request they invite their members to participate in the research process. Should they consent to this, the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], will be emailed the Research Advertisement/Script (Appendix H) for their members. Potential participants that wish to partake need to contact the researcher, who will answer or clarify any questions related to the study. Those participants that wish to engage will be emailed or posted (return addressed envelope) the Information Sheet (Appendix C), Participant Consent Form (Appendix D). Once the potential participants have received Appendix C and D, they will again be offered the opportunity to contact the researcher for further clarification and to make a time for an interview. If possible potential participants who consent to participate will be requested to sign and scan Appendix D and email back to the researcher. Those participants that do not have this technology will return Appendix D via mail in the prepaid addressed envelope.

If [REDACTED] decline, The [REDACTED] will be contacted via their website, and the same recruitment procedures will be followed.

Fathers who have accessed social services with either government or non-government agencies during the time they have cared for their children. The first eight sole fathers who consent to be participants will be involved in the research.

---

**20 Does the project involve recruitment through advertising?**

Yes  No

(If yes, attach a copy of the advertisement to the application form)

Advertisement/Script (Appendix H) will be sent to [REDACTED]

---

- 21 Does the project require permission of an organisation (e.g. an educational institution, an academic unit of Massey University or a business) to access participants or information? Yes  No

If yes: i) list the organisation(s)

- ii) attach a copy of the draft request letter(s) to the application form, e.g. letter to Board of Trustees, PVC, HoD/I/S, CEO etc (include this in your list of attachments (Q5)).

(Note that some educational institutions may require the researcher to submit a Police Security Clearance.)

N/A

- 22 Who will make the initial approach to potential participants?

The initial point of contact will be through, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

- 23 Describe criteria (if used) to select participants from the pool of potential participants.

- Men who became the primary caregivers of their children through Separation, Whānau Agreement, Family Court, Death of their spouse, Adoption or Surrogacy.
- Fathers who have accessed social service supports from either government or non-government agencies during the time that they have cared for their children.
- The first eight men who meet the criteria and consent to be participants will be involved in the research.

- 24 How much time will participants have to give to the project?

Participants will be expected to participate in up to two hours of activities made up of the following:

- An initial introduction session before the interview will be offered to participants, where they will be given a chance to ask questions and sign consent forms (Appendix D) if not already completed, which is expected to take approximately 15 minutes.
- Participants will participate in a semi-structured interview (Appendix E) lasting approximately 60-75 minutes.
- Participants will review the transcript, correct any errors and sign a release form (Appendix F), this will take place approximately one month later once transcripts have been completed, and this is expected to take approximately 30 minutes.

### Data Collection

- 25 Does the project include the use of participant questionnaire/s? Yes  No

(If yes, attach a copy of the Questionnaire/s to the application form and include this in your list of attachments (Q5))

- If yes: i) indicate whether the participants will be anonymous (i.e. their identity unknown to the researcher). Yes  No

- ii) describe how the questionnaire will be distributed and collected.

(If distributing electronically through Massey IT, attach a copy of the draft request letter to the Director, Information Technology Services to the application form. Include this in your list of attachments (Q5) – refer to the policy on “Research Use of IT Infrastructure”.)

Personal interviews



26 Does the project involve observation of participants? If yes, please describe. Yes  No

27 Does the project include the use of focus group/s? Yes  No

*(If yes, attach a copy of the Confidentiality Agreement for the focus group to the application form)*

**If yes, describe the location of the focus group and time length, including whether it will be in work time.**  
*(If the latter, ensure the researcher asks permission for this from the employer).*

28 Does the project include the use of participant interview/s? Yes  No

*(If yes, attach a copy of the Interview Questions/Schedule to the application form)*

Attached Appendix E

**If yes, describe the location of the interview and time length, including whether it will be in work time.** *(If the latter, ensure the researcher asks permission for this from the employer)*

Interviews will be conducted at a time and location convenient to participants. Interview will not take place during working hours.

29 Does the project involve sound recording? Yes  No

30 Does the project involve image recording, e.g. photo or video? Yes  No

**If yes, please describe.** *(If agreement for recording is optional for participation, ensure there is explicit consent on the Consent Form)*

31 If recording is used, will the record be transcribed? Yes  No

**If yes, state who will do the transcribing.**

*(If not the researcher, a Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement is required – attach a copy to the application form. Normally, transcripts of interviews should be provided to participants for editing, therefore an Authority For the Release of Tape Transcripts is required – attach a copy to the application form. However, if the researcher considers that the right of the participant to edit is inappropriate, a justification should be provided below.)*

The researcher will transcribe the interviews.

32 Does the project involve any other method of data collection not covered in Qs 25-31? Yes  No

**If yes, describe the method used.**

33 Does the project require permission to access databases? Yes  No

*(If yes, attach a copy of the draft request letter/s to the application form. Include this in your list of attachments (Q5). Note: If you wish to access the Massey University student database, written permission from Director, National Student Relations should be attached.)*

34 Who will carry out the data collection?

Researcher: Jason Rushton

---

**SECTION C: BENEFITS / RISK OF HARM (Refer Code Section 3, Para 10)**

---

**35 What are the possible benefits (if any) of the project to individual participants, groups, communities and institutions?**

Participants may have an interest in this subject and find it an interesting experience to be part of a research project. Participation may provide an opportunity for reflection on their experience and awareness of this subject.

The body of information could assist agencies, professionals and government on what discourses sole fathers experience when accessing supports, and making change to their policy, and working requirements. Furthermore, participants could begin to feel part of a larger cohort identifying discourses that can lead to future change. In addition, offloading their personal journey (experiences), frustrations, and encouraging the participants to move forward knowing that their voices have been heard which could have a positive therapeutic approach to self-care.

**36 What discomfort (physical, psychological, social), incapacity or other risk of harm are individual participants likely to experience as a result of participation?**

It is envisaged that participants will experience minimal discomfort from their involvement in the research. There is the possibility that in exceptional cases participants may experience some discomfort in retelling the experiences either negative or positive, if they have strong emotions associated to this experience.

**37 Describe the strategies you will use to deal with any of the situations identified in Q36.**

- To minimise any potential for harm to the participants I will ensure that there is informed consent, voluntary participation and confidentiality.
- If a participant becomes distressed during an interview the recordings will be stopped to allow the participants to compose themselves, if so required, and choose to end or continue the interview process at a later time.

Participants in distress and requiring supports will be guided to engage with

- For those participants that wish counselling, will be directed to the appropriate services in their area.

**38 What is the risk of harm (if any) of the project to the researcher?**

The researcher has lived both as a heterosexual and homosexual sole custodial father, and is aware that working with these fathers may cause him to relive events in his past and present.

**39 Describe the strategies you will use to deal with any of the situations identified in Q38.**

The student researcher has two supervisors at Massey University to discuss these events if they occur. The researcher is already aware that these events may cause him harm (if any) and if so he has a team of colleagues, namely, counsellors, psychotherapists, social workers and an external professional supervisor to offer supports. The student researcher will take all reasonable precautions to ensure their physical safety. This includes taking a cell phone so someone can be contacted should they feel unsafe, letting someone know the research plans such as where the researcher is going and how long they intend to be there.

**40 What discomfort (physical, psychological, social) incapacity or other risk of harm are groups/communities and institutions likely to experience as a result of this research?**

None

41 Describe the strategies you will use to deal with any of the situations identified in Q40.

N/A

42 Is ethnicity data being collected as part of the project? Yes  No

If yes, please describe how the data will be used.

(Note that harm can be done through an analysis based on insufficient sample or sub-set numbers).

N/A

43 If participants are children/students in a pre-school/school/tertiary setting, describe the arrangements you will make for children/students who are present but not taking part in the research.

(Note that no child/student should be disadvantaged through the research)

N/A

#### SECTION D: INFORMED & VOLUNTARY CONSENT (Refer Code Section 3, Para 11)

44 By whom and how, will information about the research be given to potential participants?

Letter (Appendix C)

45 Will consent to participate be given in writing? Yes  No

(Attach copies of Consent Form/s to the application form)

If no, justify the use of oral consent.

46 Will participants include persons under the age of 16? Yes  No

If yes: i) indicate the age group and competency for giving consent.

ii) indicate if the researcher will be obtaining the consent of parent(s)/caregiver(s). Yes  No

(Note that parental/caregiver consent for school-based research may be required by the school even when children are competent. Ensure Information Sheets and Consent Forms are in a style and language appropriate for the age group.)

47 Will participants include persons whose capacity to give informed consent may be compromised? Yes  No

If yes, describe the consent process you will use.

48 Will the participants be proficient in English? Yes  No

If no, all documentation for participants (Information Sheets/Consent Forms/Questionnaire etc) must be translated into the participants' first-language.

(Attach copies of the translated Information Sheet/Consent Form etc to the application form)

#### SECTION E: PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES (Refer Code Section 3, Para 12)

49 Will any information be obtained from any source other than the participant? Yes  No

If yes, describe how and from whom.

50 Yes  No

---

Will any information that identifies participants be given to any person outside the research team?

If yes, indicate why and how.

- 51 Will the participants be anonymous (i.e. their identity unknown to the researcher?) Yes  No

If no, explain how confidentiality of the participants' identities will be maintained in the treatment and use of the data.

As participants will be interviewed, they will not be anonymous to the interviewer. However, participant's names and identifies will not be revealed in the final report. Data relating to the project will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and on a password locked computer.

- 52 Will an institution (e.g. school) to which participants belong be named or be able to be identified? Yes  No

If yes, explain how you have made the institution aware of this?

N/A

- 53 Outline how and where:

i) the data will be stored, and

All data collected will only be used for this study, and all findings will be kept confidential and locked away in a filing cabinet. Information that is electronically stored on a computer or any electrical device will be password protected. All names and addresses will be removed and replaced with an identification number. A master identification file will be created that links names to numbers which will be kept in a locked cabinet.

*(Pay particular attention to identifiable data, e.g. tapes, videos and images)*

ii) Consent Forms will be stored.

Printed information will be stored in an encoded safe or locked cupboard.

*(Note that Consent Forms should be stored separately from data)*

- 54 i) Who will have access to the data/Consent Forms?

The student researcher and supervisors.

ii) How will the data/Consent Forms be protected from unauthorised access?

Locked away in a filing cabinet, and only accessible by the researcher.

- 55 How long will the data from the study be kept, who will be responsible for its safe keeping and eventual disposal? (Note that health information relating to an identifiable individual must be retained for at least 10 years, or in the case of a child, 10 years from the age of 16).

*(For student research the Massey University HOD Institute/School/Section / Supervisor / or nominee should be responsible for the eventual disposal of data. Note that although destruction is the most common form of disposal, at times, transfer of data to an official archive may be appropriate. Refer to the Code, Section 4, Para 24.)*

Twelve months after the project has been finalised and the thesis has been examined, the consent forms will be shredded and electronic files deleted from the student researcher's computer.

---

## SECTION F: DECEPTION (Refer Code Section 3, Para 13)

- 56 Is deception involved at any stage of the project? Yes  No

If yes, justify its use and describe the debriefing procedures.

---

**SECTION G: CONFLICT OF ROLE/INTEREST (Refer Code Section 3, Para 14)**

---

57 Is the project to be funded or supported in any way, e.g. supply of products for testing? Yes  No

If yes: i) state, the source of funding or support:

- Massey Academic Unit
- Massey University (e.g. MURF, SIF)
- External Organisation (provide name and detail of funding/support)

N/A

ii) does the source of the funding present any conflict of interest with regard to the research topic?

N/A

iii) identify any potential conflict of interest due to the source of funding and explain how this will be managed?

N/A

58 Does the researcher/s have a financial interest in the outcome of the project? Yes  No

If yes, explain how the conflict of interest situation will be dealt with.

59 Describe any professional or other relationship between the researcher and the participants? (e.g. employer, employee, work colleague, lecturer/student, practitioner/patient, researcher/family member). Indicate how any resulting conflict of role will be dealt with.

None

---

**SECTION H: COMPENSATION TO PARTICIPANTS (Refer Code Section 4, Para 23)**

---

60 Will any payments, koha or other form of compensation or acknowledgement be given to participants? Yes  No

If yes, describe what, how and why.

*(Note that compensation (if provided) should be given to all participants and not constitute an inducement. Details of any compensation provided must be included in the Information Sheet.)*

---

**SECTION I: TREATY OF WAITANGI (Refer Code Section 2)**

---

61 Are Maori the primary focus of the project? Yes  No

If yes: Answer Q62 – 65

If no, outline: i) what Maori involvement there may be, and Māori fathers may offer to participate in this research.

ii) **how this will be managed.**

As a social worker, the researcher's practice is informed by bi-cultural competent practice framework. The researcher has a general knowledge of basic tikanga and kawa to ensure a culturally respectful space is provided in which to conduct the research.

If required, Alex Tuira, Financial Literacy Adult Educator, from KP Holdings NZ Cultural Advisor for Waimakariri, Wellbeing North Canterbury Community Trust and University of Canterbury, has consented to assist with any cultural aspects of my research.

Is the researcher competent in te reo Maori and tikanga Maori?

Yes  No

If no, outline the processes in place for the provision of cultural advice.

N/A

63 **Identify the group/s with whom consultation has taken place or is planned and describe the consultation process.**

*(Where consultation has already taken place, attach a copy of the supporting documentation to the application form, e.g. a letter from an iwi authority)*

N/A

64 **Describe any ongoing involvement of the group/s consulted in the project.**

N/A

65 **Describe how information resulting from the project will be shared with the group/s consulted?**

N/A

---

**SECTION J: CULTURAL ISSUES (Refer Code Section 3, Para 15)**

---

66 **What ethnic or social group/s (other than Maori) does the project involve?**

Tauiwi

67 **Are there any aspects of the project that might raise specific cultural issues?**

Yes  No

If yes, explain. Otherwise, proceed to Section K.

68 **Does the researcher speak the language of the target population?**

Yes  No

If no, specify how communication with participants will be managed.

N/A

69 **Describe the cultural competence of the researcher for carrying out the project.**

*(Note that where the researcher is not a member of the cultural group being researched, a cultural advisor may be necessary)*

As a registered social worker and a requirement by both the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers and the Social Workers Registration Board Competency requirements. I am able to work with a variety of ethnic and social groups in New Zealand.

70 **Identify the group/s with whom consultation has taken place or is planned.**

*(Where consultation has already taken place, attach a copy of the supporting documentation to the application form)*

N/A

- 71 Describe any ongoing involvement of the group/s consulted in the project.  
NIL
- 72 Describe how information resulting from the project will be shared with the group/s consulted.  
N/A
- 73 If the research is to be conducted overseas, describe the arrangements you will make for local participants to express concerns regarding the research.  
N/A

---

**SECTION K: SHARING RESEARCH FINDINGS (Refer Code Section 4, Para 26)**

---

- 74 Describe how information resulting from the project will be shared with participants and disseminated in other forums, e.g. peer review, publications, and conferences.  
*(Note that receipt of a summary is one of the participant rights)*  
Participants will be provided with a summary of the research once it has been finalised. Abstracts may be submitted to journals for future publication following the finalisation of the thesis.

---

**SECTION L: INVASIVE PROCEDURES/PHYSIOLOGICAL TESTS (Refer Code Section 4, Para 21)**

---

- 75 Does the project involve the collection of tissue, blood, other body fluids; physiological tests or the use of hazardous substances, procedures or equipment? Yes  No

If yes, are the procedures to be used governed by Standard Operating Procedure(s)? If so, please name the SOP(s). If not, identify the procedure(s) and describe how you will minimise the risks associated with the procedure(s)?

- 76 Does the project involve the use of radiation (x-ray, CT scan or bone densitometry (DEXA))? Yes  No

If yes, has the Massey Licensee been contacted and consulted? Yes  No

*(A copy of the supporting documentation must be provided with the ethics application, i.e. relevant SOP, participant dose assessment calculation sheet and approval of the dose assessment from the relevant authority).  
NOTE: See "Additional Information for Researchers" (Item 4.2) document for further detail.*

*(If yes to Q75 and/or Q76, complete Section L; otherwise proceed to Section M)*

- 77 Describe the material to be taken and the method used to obtain it. Include information about the training of those taking the samples and the safety of all persons involved. If blood is taken, specify the volume and number of collections.

- 78 Will the material be stored? Yes  No

If yes, describe how, where and for how long.

- 9 Describe how the material will be disposed of (either after the research is completed or at the end of the storage period).

*(Note that the wishes of relevant cultural groups must be taken into account)*



- 80 Will material collected for another purpose (e.g. diagnostic use) be used? Yes  No
- If yes, did the donors give permission for use of their samples in this project? Yes  No   
*(Attach evidence of this to the application form).*

If no, describe how consent will be obtained. Where the samples have been anonymised and consent cannot be obtained, provide justification for the use of these samples.

- 81 Will any samples be imported into New Zealand? Yes  No
- If yes, provide evidence of permission of the donors for their material to be used in this research.

- 82 Will any samples go out of New Zealand? Yes  No
- If yes, state where.  
*(Note this information must be included in the Information Sheet)*

- 83 Describe any physiological tests/procedures that will be used.  
 N/A

- 84 Will participants be given a health-screening test prior to participation? *(If yes, attach a copy of the health checklist)* Yes  No

**Reminder: Attach the completed Screening Questionnaire and other attachments listed in Q5**

**SECTION M: DECLARATION** *(Complete appropriate box)*

**ACADEMIC STAFF RESEARCH**  
**Declaration for Academic Staff Applicant**

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. My Head of Department/School/Institute knows that I am undertaking this research. The information contained in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

Staff Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT RESEARCH**  
**Declaration for Student Applicant**

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and discussed the ethical analysis with my Supervisor. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.

The information contained in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

Student Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration for Supervisor**

I have assisted the student in the ethical analysis of this project. As supervisor of this research I will ensure that the research is carried out according to the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.



Supervisor's Signature

Date:

Print Name

---

**GENERAL STAFF RESEARCH/EVALUATIONS**  
**Declaration for General Staff Applicant**

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and discussed the ethical analysis with my Line Manager. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. The information contained in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

General Staff Applicant's Signature

Date:

**Declaration for Line Manager**

I declare that to the best of my knowledge, this application complies with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and that I have approved its content and agreed that it can be submitted.

Line Manager's Signature

Date:

Print Name

---

**TEACHING PROGRAMME**  
**Declaration for Paper Controller**

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to undertake the teaching programme as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants. My Head of Department/School/Institute knows that I am undertaking this teaching programme. The information contained in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

Paper Controller's Signature

Date:

**Declaration for Head of Department/School/Institute**

I declare that to the best of my knowledge, this application complies with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and that I have approved its content and agreed that it can be submitted.

Head of Dept/School/Inst Signature

Date:

Print Name

Reference

Statistics New Zealand (2014). *Estimated population of New Zealand*. Received February 18, 2015, from New Zealand Statistics

webpage: [http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools\\_and\\_services/tools/population\\_clock.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/tools/population_clock.aspx)

[Print on Massey University departmental letterhead]  
[Logo, name and address of Department/School/Institute/Section]

## **Sole father's experiences of accessing social services.**

### **Information Sheet**

My name is Jason Rushton and I am a thesis student on the Masters of Social Work programme at Massey University. I would like to undertake a study of sole fathers who have taken up the role to care permanently for their child(ren), either through adoption, separation, widowed, whānau agreement, surrogacy and through the Family Court. The purpose of the study is to learn about the experiences sole fathers face when accessing social services.

New Zealand Statistics (2014) has indicated that families are changing, and men are becoming more involved in childrearing; the reasons for this is varied, such as voluntary choices, changes in employment status, and changes in family make-up, from two parenting to custodial or non-custodial parenting, and shared parenting arrangements. Much has been written and promoted at present about the importance of fathers in their children's lives. However, as with all social change in our society, not all the conditions support this movement. For example, while welcoming more fathers' involvement, services that work with families are unsure of how to make their services more attractive and accessible.

### **Invitation**

Participants will need to have accessed social services, either government, for example, Work and Income and non-government, for example, The Salvation Army in maintaining and creating their families.

I will be accepting the first eight applicants that meet the criteria noted above, and if possible have accessed both government and non-government social services.

I would like to interview you face to face. The interview will take approximately one hour and be at a location suitable to you. If you wish to partake, please contact me by email, [REDACTED], txt or phone on [REDACTED]. The interview will be transcribed and you will have an opportunity to review and amend the transcript. This may take up to an hour.

### **Confidentiality**

All interviews are confidential; pseudonyms will be used in the report. No specific schools, agencies, professionals or organisations will be named and any identifiable detail will be deleted to protect the participants.

### **Data Management**

All interviews will be audio taped and transcribed by the researcher. The interview tapes and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home. All tapes and transcripts will be destroyed by the researcher twelve months following the examination of the final report by Massey University.

### **Your Rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question;
- Withdraw from the study at any time during participation, until your transcript has been approved;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time;
- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- Read and edit the transcript and be given access to the final report.

Please contact me if you would like to take part, or if you have any questions regarding this research.

**Questions or Concerns:** If you have any questions or concerns about the project, you are welcome to contact my research supervisor.

**Project Contacts:**

Researcher: Jason Rushton  
Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Research Supervisor one: Dr Michael Dale  
Phone: 06 356 9099 ext. 83522  
Email m.p.dale@massey.ac.nz

Research Supervisor two: Dr Martin Sullivan  
Phone: 06 356 9099 ext. 83525  
Email m.j.sullivan@massey.ac.nz

Thank you for considering taking part in this research.

Jason Rushton

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 15/46. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Prof Julie Boddy, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 86055, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz*

**APPENDIX D**

[Print on Massey University departmental letterhead]  
[Logo, name and address of Department/School/Institute/Section]

**Sole father’s experiences of accessing social services.**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Full Name - printed** .....

## **Sole father's experiences of accessing social services.**

### **Interview Schedule**

In asking this question I am interested in the following issues:

1. What are sole father's experiences when caring for their children?
2. How they went about accessing social service supports and their engagement experiences?

It is further anticipated that the research will be able to:

1. Identify whether any themes are apparent in the sole father's narratives.
2. Identify whether there is any connection between the themes identified.

### **Introduce myself:**

Cultural appropriateness: Mihimihi to any Māori participants.

I have been a custodial father with guardianship and day to day care of my children through the Family Court for the past 18 years.

I am a registered social worker who is engaged with our most vulnerable families. I specialise in working alongside fathers and developing behavioral and parenting programs for young children.

### **Introduce the research project:**

MSW

My interest in the project

General philosophy

Structure of the interview

### **Participants to introduce themselves**

Cultural appropriateness: Mihimihi

Sexuality

Ethnicity

Family members

### **Key Questions**

Father's experiences.

Father's perception of their experiences, and how they understood this.

Father's overall evaluation of their experiences.

- 1. Please tell me about your family?**
- 2. What were the circumstances around you becoming a sole father?**
- 3. What have you found to be positive about being a sole father?**

- 4. Have you experienced any disadvantages being a sole father?**
- 5. Have you faced any social stigma when parenting your children?**
- 6. What social services have you accessed?**
- 7. Why did you choose to access these services?**
- 8. How were you treated when accessing social services?**
- 9. What was the outcome?**
- 10. How did you manage that process?**

**APPENDIX F**

**Authority for the Release of Transcripts**

Researchers normally provide transcripts of interviews to participants for editing and obtain approval for the release of the transcripts. If the researcher considers that the right of the participant to edit is inappropriate, a justification to the Committee would need to be made in the application.

**Prepare your Authority for Release of Transcripts based on the format below.**

[Print on Massey University departmental letterhead]  
[Logo, name and address of Department/School/Institute/Section]

**Sole Fathers experiences of accessing social services.**

**AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me. I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Full Name - printed**

## APPENDIX G

[Print on Massey University departmental letterhead]  
[Logo, name and address of Department/School/Institute/Section]

[To Administrator of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **Sole father's experiences of accessing social services.**

My name is Jason Rushton and I am a thesis student on the Masters of Social Work programme at Massey University. I am interested in exploring the experience of sole fathers caring for their child(ren). The purpose of the study is to learn about the experiences sole fathers face when accessing social services. I plan to interview up to eight sole fathers.

Can you please inform the members of your group, [REDACTED], about this research by way of the Advertisement/Script on your webpage? Potential participants are encouraged to contact me directly for further information either by email: [REDACTED], txt or phone [REDACTED].

My thesis supervisors are:

Dr Michael Dale, phone (06) 356 9099 ext. 83522, M.P.Dale@massey.ac.nz and Dr Martin Sullivan, (06) 356 9099 ext. 83525, M.J.Sullivan@massey.ac.nz whom you can contact should you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration of this project and your members' involvement. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Warm regards

Jason Rushton

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 15/46. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Prof Julie Boddy, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 86055, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz*



## **Sole Fathers experiences of accessing social services.**

**You are invited to take part in research that Jason Rushton a thesis student on the Masters of Social Work programme at Massey University is undertaking in regards to sole fathers experiences accessing social services.**

**Jason is interested in hearing about your experiences of accessing social services and the impacts to you and your family.**

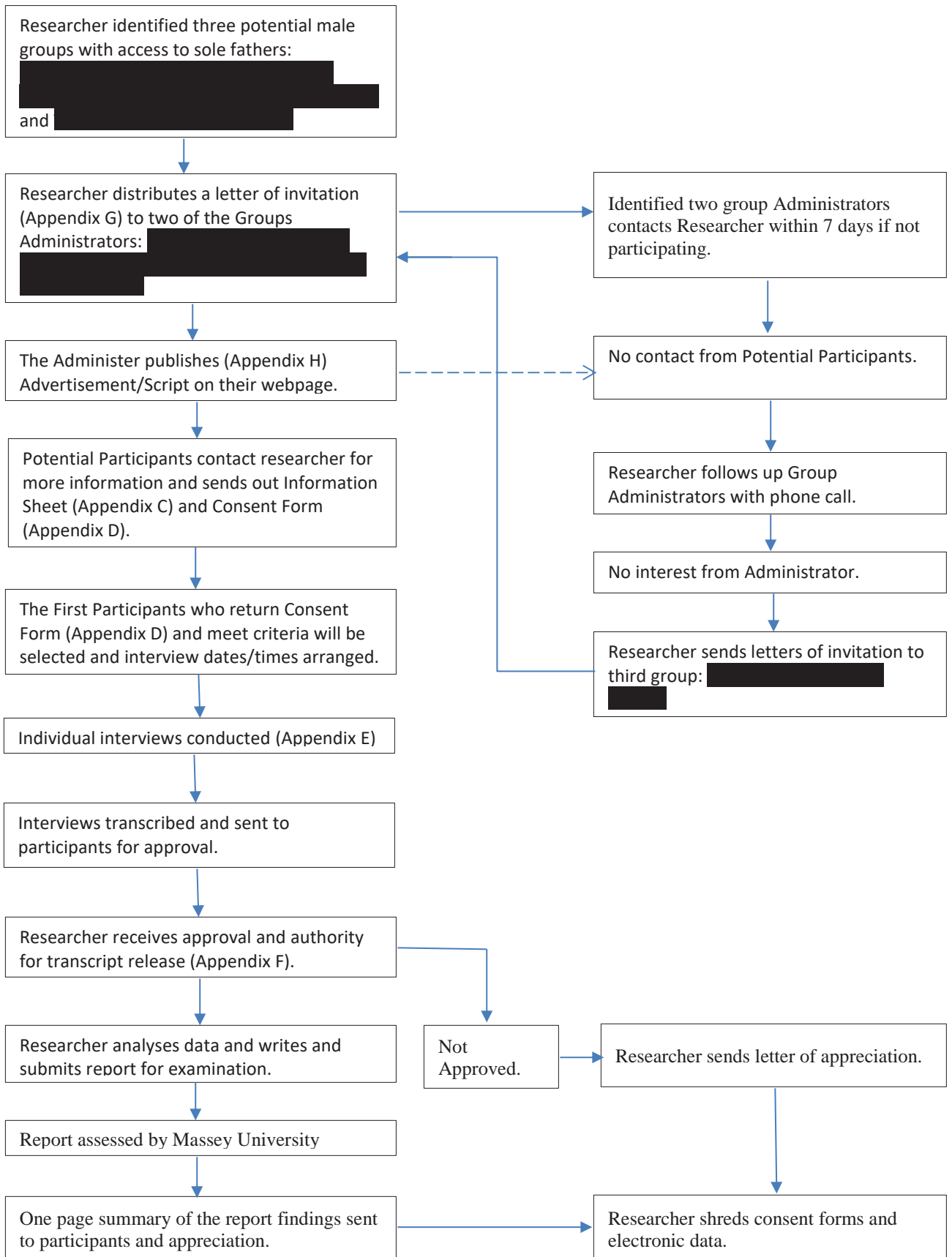
If you would like to find out more information, please contact Jason Rushton, by Phone or Text on [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

This project is supervised by Dr Michael Dale, Massey University, Phone (06) 356 9099 ext. 83522, M.P.Dale@massey.ac.nz and Dr Martin Sullivan, Massey University, Phone (06) 356 9099 ext. 83525, M.J.Sullivan@massey.ac.nz.

# APPENDIX I

## Research Design with Procedural Flow Chart

This research project is a qualitative design using an in depth semi-structured interview format with eight sole father selected from two different father's groups, who have participants throughout New Zealand.





MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

17 August 2015

Jason Rushton  
20 Darroch Street  
Belfast  
**CHRISTCHURCH 8051**

Dear Jason

**Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 15/46**  
**Sole fathers experiences of accessing social services**

Thank you for your letter dated 17 August 2015.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Stewart-Withers'.

Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Chair  
**Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B**

cc Dr Michael Dale  
School of Social Work  
PN371

Dr Martin Sullivan  
School of Social Work  
PN371

Dr Kieran O'Donoghue  
School of Social Work  
PN371

---

**Massey University Human Ethics Committee**  
**Accredited by the Health Research Council**

Research Ethics, Research and Enterprise

Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T 06 951 6841; 06 951 6840  
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz; animalethics@massey.ac.nz; gtc@massey.ac.nz www.massey.ac.nz

## APPENDIX K

<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	
ANZASW	Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers
CYFs	Child, Youth and Family
DPB	Domestic Purpose Benefit
DSMV	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
FFNZ	Focus on the Family New Zealand
GP	General Practitioner
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IVF	In-vitro fertilisation
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexed and Queer
MSD	Ministry of Social Development

<b>Te Reo Māori</b>	
<b>Te Reo</b>	<b>Translation and Definition</b>
Whānau	Family
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Treaty of Waitangi
Tauīwi	None Māori
Tangi	Meeting House
Waiata	Song
Taranaki	Town in New Zealand
Turangawaewae	The area that is a person's home
Tangata whenua	Indigenous people of New Zealand and literally means 'people of the land'
Takatāpui	Devoted partner of the same sex
Māori	Polynesian inhabitant and of New Zealand. Native name, said to mean 'of the usual kind'
Iwi	Māori tribe
Hapu	Māori sub-tribe