

Information about WAVES/WCLS consultation re. Family Court Review Nov. 2012

The [Family Court Proceedings Reform Bill](#) is now available and submissions are due 13 February 2013. WAVES is currently producing a summary of the Bill and discussion document about the changes proposed.

On 28 November 2012 WAVES co-hosted a workshop with [Waitakere Community Law Service](#) to discuss the implications for families, children, and the family violence and legal sectors of the proposals contained in Ministerial press releases. Read the notes from this workshop [here](#).

The changes we discussed include:

- Reduction in Family Court counselling sessions from 6 to 3 from January 2013 until Reform Bill is passed, which proposes no counselling except by order of a Judge.
- Proposal to require parents with Care of Children Act applications to complete a free Parenting Through Separation Course and (user pays) Family Disputes Resolution process before applications heard in Court.
- Simplification of Court processes into three tracks:
 - Fast Track for serious cases, lawyers and legal aid available.
 - Simple Track for single, non complex cases, no lawyers no legal aid.
 - Standard Track for complex, multiple issue cases, mostly self-representation but some access to lawyers if intractable and some access to legal aid.
- More flexible legislation around FV and DV programmes.
- Extending definition in Domestic Violence Act to include economic abuse.
- Increasing maximum penalty to 3 years for breach of a Protection Order.

See WAVES Trust's submissions webpage for more information about our submission-building plans.