

**TASKFORCE FOR  
ACTION ON VIOLENCE  
WITHIN FAMILIES**



*the* **First  
Report**

**JULY 2006**

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## The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families

The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families was established in June 2005 to advise the Family Violence Ministerial Team on how to make improvements to the way family violence is addressed, and how to eliminate family violence in New Zealand.



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# Executive Summary

## Our Vision

The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families is a significant commitment by the government and non-government sectors, independent Crown entities and the judiciary to work together and provide leadership to end family violence and promote stable, healthy families.

The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families was established in June 2005 to advise the Family Violence Ministerial Team on how to make improvements to the way family violence is addressed, and how to eliminate family violence in New Zealand.

Our vision is that

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**All families and whānau have healthy, respectful, stable relationships, free from violence.**

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## Our Approach

This is the first time decision-makers from the government and non-government sectors, the judiciary and Crown agencies have come together to tackle the problem of family violence and achieve this vision.

The programme of action set out in this report builds on the initiatives put in place under *Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy*.

We are working with the Family Violence Ministerial Team to improve the way our society responds to family violence, and to achieve a better future for New Zealand families.

Eliminating family violence is a significant priority within the Government's *Families — Young and Old* theme, and our programme of action is a major contribution to the Government's drive to achieve strong families, healthy and confident kids, older people ageing positively and safe communities.

We are taking action on four fronts to achieve our vision:

- **leadership** – we need leadership at all levels if we are going to transform our society into one that does not tolerate family violence
- **changing attitudes and behaviour** – we have to reduce society's tolerance of violence and change people's damaging behaviour within families
- **safety and accountability** – swift and unambiguous action by safe family members and the justice sector increases the chances of people being safe and of holding perpetrators to account
- **effective support services** – individuals and families affected by family violence need help and support from all of us so they can recover and thrive.

## The Family Violence Ministerial Team

- Minister for Social Development and Employment (Chair)
- Minister of Education
- Minister of Police
- Minister of Health
- Minister of Justice
- Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment (CYF)
- Minister of Women's Affairs
- the Chairperson of the Open Hearing into the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children.

## The Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families

- the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development (Chair)\*
- the Chief Executive of the Accident Compensation Corporation
- the Secretary for Education\*\*
- the Director-General of Health
- the Secretary for Justice
- the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs\*\*
- the Commissioner of New Zealand Police
- the Chief Executive of Te Puni Kōkiri\*\*
- the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Women's Affairs
- the Chief District Court Judge
- the Principal Family Court Judge
- the Children's Commissioner
- the Chief Families Commissioner
- Chief Executives of five non-government organisations representing:
  - the Te Rito Advisory Committee (National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, Jigsaw (formerly Child Abuse Prevention Services) and Relationship Services)
  - the Family Services National Advisory Council (CCS and Pacific Trust Canterbury)
- the Deputy Chief Executive, Social Services Policy, Ministry of Social Development.

## Advisory Group to the Taskforce

The Taskforce has been supported by an Advisory Group. The group's members are, in addition to Taskforce member agencies:

- Department of Corrections
- Office of Ethnic Affairs
- Māori Women's Welfare League
- The National NGO Family Violence Prevention Alliance, comprising:
  - Age Concern New Zealand
  - Barnardos
  - Family Planning Association
  - Jigsaw (formerly Child Abuse Prevention Services)
  - National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges
  - National Network of Stopping Violence Services
  - New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse
  - Relationship Services
  - Royal New Zealand Plunket Society
  - Save the Children New Zealand
  - UNICEF New Zealand
- Northern Family Violence Prevention Group
- Pacific Islands Women's Project Aotearoa
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

\* Child, Youth and Family merged with the Ministry of Social Development on 1 July 2006.

\*\* Are joining the Taskforce.

- New Zealand's rates of child abuse and neglect, levels of domestic violence, deaths of children and women, and the rate of elder abuse are shameful.
- It will take the actions of all New Zealanders to achieve our vision of a society in which all families/whānau have healthy, respectful stable relationships, free from violence.
- Eliminating family violence is going to take many years.
- Prevention is not just a matter of stopping violence – it is about building a society that supports all people to flourish and in which violence is extremely rare or non-existent.
- It is essential that social attitudes do not tolerate, reinforce or support family violence.
- Prevention happens best through developing skills and knowledge that build the capacity of individuals and families to get the best from life and to cope with difficult circumstances when they occur. Skills and knowledge can be developed in settings such as schools, health services and communities.
- When family violence does happen, victims must first be kept safe, responses must be co-ordinated, and friends, workmates, family and community must be supported to prevent it happening again.
- It is essential to have a strong community sector, with adequate funding, flexible contracts and good relationships with government agencies.
- Everyone involved in preventing family violence and supporting people affected by it must keep learning and must share their knowledge with others.

## Our First Programme of Action

Eliminating family violence will take sustained, co-ordinated and multi-level action over a number of years. Our initial focus is on what needs to be done immediately – between July 2006 and June 2007 – to stop family violence, better support the individuals and families affected by family violence and lay the foundations for future work.

Family violence occurs between family members in families of all cultures, classes, backgrounds and socio-economic circumstances. However, in developing services, policy and interventions, it is important to remember that family violence is heavily gendered. The predominant pattern is one of male violence directed at a female partner, and there are significant overlaps between male violence against female partners and child abuse and neglect. We also know that male perpetrators are more likely to seriously injure and even kill the women and children they are violent towards.

Perpetrating violence within families, including establishing a climate of fear and the threat of violence, is usually a deliberate strategy to exert domination and power over others. Physical violence is often only one part of a range of strategies which may include psychological abuse and threats, financial abuse and sexual abuse, all of which create a context in which the perpetrator feels entitled to control the behaviour of others. Understanding that family violence operates within a context of power and control is crucial to keeping families safe.

We will support effective approaches with affected communities, including Māori and Pacific peoples. We will focus on the needs and experiences of specific population groups, such as people with disabilities and new migrants.



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## Leadership

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WE ARE WORKING TO ENCOURAGE LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS TO END FAMILY VIOLENCE AND PROMOTE STABLE, HEALTHY FAMILIES. THE TASKFORCE IS PROVIDING LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

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Leadership is needed at all levels and across all communities in New Zealand. It is needed to change attitudes and influence behaviour that contribute to family violence. Political leadership will be a key element in giving this area impetus.

We will ensure that:

- our actions are relevant and effective for all of New Zealand's families, whānau and communities
- our programme of action is successfully implemented
- there is ongoing learning by all those working in the family violence area.

We will continue to look for ways to encourage and support local and regional leadership. We are encouraging and supporting community leadership through our work to change attitudes and behaviour.

We need to get smarter about how we create knowledge and make use of information about family violence. During the next year we will learn rapidly both from the implementation of this programme of action and from work already going on in communities.

## Changing Attitudes and Behaviour

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WE ARE WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES ON A NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN TO CHANGE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR SO THEY DO NOT SUPPORT FAMILY VIOLENCE.

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We will develop a comprehensive campaign, implemented at community, regional and national levels, which is based on:

- a sound understanding of the motivators, influencers and barriers to change
- strategies and key messages to influence distinct behaviours and audiences. We are supporting:
  - community-owned and driven family violence prevention initiatives
  - national activities and actions to change prevailing attitudes and behaviour that contribute to family violence, and to encourage healthy, stable relationships.

This campaign will be long term and phased sequentially to target different forms of family violence and will be based on good research and continuous evaluation.

Government and community organisations are working together to identify where and how to build on the good work already going on. Additional funding for family violence prevention initiatives will be available for organisations and communities from **early 2007**.

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WE ARE DEVELOPING A NEW PROCESS TO UNDERSTAND WHY FAMILY VIOLENCE DEATHS OCCUR SO THAT WE CAN MAKE CHANGES TO SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES AND PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS.

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A review of existing information on family violence deaths is under way. A process for reviewing all family violence-related deaths will be designed by **June 2007**.

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## Ensuring Safety and Accountability

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WE ARE IMPROVING HOW COURTS; POLICE; CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY; THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND PROGRAMME PROVIDERS WORK TOGETHER TO:

- KEEP VICTIMS AND FAMILIES SAFE
  - STOP RE-OFFENDING AND HOLD PERPETRATORS TO ACCOUNT
  - ENSURE PEOPLE GET EASY ACCESS TO THE SUPPORT THEY NEED.
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Changes include:

- ensuring victims know what support and services are available
- improving victims' access to protection orders
- establishing dedicated Family Violence Courts in the Wellington and Auckland regions
- building safe and effective programmes for couples and families, in addition to the existing programmes for victims and perpetrators.

**We are establishing a nationwide scheme to better support children affected by family violence. The scheme will be established in September 2006.**

## Effective Support Services

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AS AN IMMEDIATE PRIORITY WE NEED TO ENSURE SERVICE PROVIDERS WORKING IN FAMILY VIOLENCE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR SERVICES.

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It is important that victims of family violence receive effective and appropriate services at the time at which they need them. This includes crisis, post-crisis and prevention services.

We believe that sustainable funding, effective services and strong relationships between the government and non-government sectors will improve service capacity and capability and lead to an even better response to individuals and families affected by family violence. Government agencies and non-government organisations are working together on the best approach to costing non-government sector family support services. We are presently working towards adequate and sustainable funding for these services, including the continued use of integrated contracts.

## Our Next Programme of Action

We will have a strong focus on prevention as well as intervention. We will look to identify further opportunities for preventing family violence by investing at key developmental and transition stages in the lives of individuals and families. For some families intensive, wraparound services will be needed.

We're committed to developing actions that will:

- help people and families to build on their own strengths and have healthy relationships
- train the people who come into contact with families that experience violence so that they can better screen, help, and refer
- improve the child protection system so that contact with the government agencies leads to more effective services for children and good outcomes for families
- involve all family members in stopping violence in their family relationships
- provide people with information and practical strategies to help themselves and others to resolve family conflict in non-violent ways.



# 1. Our Vision and Approach

*Chapter 1 sets out our vision and gives an overview of how we plan to achieve it.*

# 1. Our Vision and Approach

## Our Vision

The vision of *Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy (Te Rito)* is of all families and whānau living free from violence. We have built on this to develop the vision that:

**ALL FAMILIES AND WHĀNAU HAVE HEALTHY, RESPECTFUL, STABLE RELATIONSHIPS, FREE FROM VIOLENCE.**

To achieve this vision we need confident and resilient individuals and families, and a society that promotes healthy ways to deal with conflict and responds swiftly to violence when it occurs.

We will know we are succeeding when:

- the levels of all forms of family violence, including child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence and elder abuse and neglect, are consistently reduced each year
- victims are safe and have the support they and their families need to make choices about their own wellbeing
- the perpetrators of family violence do not re-offend and are held accountable for their actions
- New Zealanders and New Zealand institutions do not tolerate family violence
- Families and whānau have the support they need to live free from violence.

## Achieving Our Vision

This is our first programme of action, and it outlines the initial steps we are taking as a partnership towards achieving our vision. It builds on work done under *Te Rito* and draws on the experiences of people working to prevent family violence and those affected by it. It builds on the good work already going on in communities and by those working with whānau, Pacific families and families from other ethnic groups.


However, achieving the vision will take sustained and co-ordinated effort over a number of years from all sectors of society, particularly health, justice, education and social services.

Family violence is a complex problem with many interrelated causes: As the World Health Organisation states, "No single factor can explain why some people or groups are at higher risk of inter-personal violence while others are more protected from it".\*

Risk happens at individual, relationship, community, and social levels, and family violence can often result from different factors working together. Causes include:

- individual factors, for example, abuse of drugs and alcohol, chronic and severe stress, low income, witnessing or experiencing violence as a child
- family/relationship factors, for example, partner or marital conflict, economic stress, marital instability
- community factors, for example, weak community sanctions against family violence, poverty
- social factors, for example, social norms that tolerate and support violence
- gender norms, for example, where people believe they have ownership or control of other people, operate at all levels: individual, family, community and society.

\* World Health Organisation (2004) *Preventing Violence: A Guide to Implementing the Recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health: 4.*



*... achieving the vision will take sustained and co-ordinated effort over a number of years...*

Key development and transition stages in people's lives are:

- pregnancy and birth
- baby to toddler (0–3 years)
- childhood (4–10 years)
- adolescence and young adulthood (11–17 years)
- transitions in adulthood
- older ages.

We will use these key stages to identify opportunities to break inter-generational cycles of violence and help families to be safe and healthy.

These opportunities to prevent family violence narrow as individuals grow and they learn patterns of behaviour. Each developmental phase in a child's life builds on the last: repair is always possible but it becomes progressively more difficult and the need for interventions that guarantee safety and accountability becomes more pressing as people move into adulthood. This suggests that we need to shift the balance of our response to prevention and earlier intervention. Early intervention is more likely to succeed, is less costly to society and increases the likelihood of good outcomes earlier for individuals and families.

We will incorporate this approach into our future work programme. We will use this life cycle approach as a basis for informing the implementation of the first part of our programme of work.

Our initial focus, as outlined in Chapters 2 to 5, is on what needs to be done immediately – between July 2006 and June 2007 – to better support the victims of family violence and to lay the foundations for ending family violence in New Zealand.

Prevention is not just a matter of stopping violence – it is about building a society that supports all people to flourish, in which violence is extremely rare or non-existent. There are general approaches which benefit families and their members at all points of the life cycle and help reduce family violence. They include reducing poverty and inequality and improving empathy throughout the life cycle.

This approach allows us to consider the opportunities transitions present to create families with healthy, respectful and stable relationships, and to deal with the risk or reality of family violence. To achieve our vision we are taking action on four fronts.

- Leadership (Chapter 2)
- Changing attitudes and behaviour (Chapter 3)
- Ensuring safety and accountability (Chapter 4)
- Effective support services (Chapter 5).



*... opportunities to prevent family violence narrow as individuals grow and they learn patterns of behaviour.*

## Our First Programme of Action

- In our first year we begin the long task of changing attitudes to violence through a nationwide campaign.
- We will also make sure that the services and supports we have now are working as well as they can.
- We will look at all cases of death from family violence to see what can be learnt to make current systems work better.
- We will work with successful community providers to identify policy, legal and other barriers to integrated and collaborative responses.
- We will take steps to have the justice sector (District and Family Courts; Police; Child, Youth and Family; the Department of Corrections and non-government organisations) work together to meet the needs of victims, hold perpetrators to account, and prevent re-offending.
- We will build the capacity and capability of non-government organisations, putting them on a sustainable funding path, and creating a longer-term relationship that recognises their unique knowledge and skills and strong links with their communities.
- We will support effective approaches with high need communities, including Māori and Pacific peoples.
- We will focus on the needs and experiences of specific population groups, such as people with disabilities, refugees and new migrants.

## Our Next Programme of Action

Our next programme of action, which will begin in July 2007, will have a strong focus on prevention as well as intervention, identifying further opportunities for preventing family violence by focusing on key developmental and transition stages in the lives of individuals and families. This approach allows us to consider the opportunities the key stages present to create families with healthy, respectful and stable relationships, and to deal with the risk or reality of family violence. For some families intensive, wraparound services will be needed.

We will take a two-pronged approach:

- learning from people on the frontline about what we need to change in our policies and practices
- finding out from those seeking help whether they received what they needed to put their lives back together and to get on with their lives.

We will learn from frontline workers in the Family Violence Intervention Programme, which covers all case managers in Work and Income, and from those involved in local case co-ordination meetings, including non-government organisations; Child, Youth and Family; Police; the Department of Corrections and other government agencies.

We will also build on collaborative efforts between non-government organisations and key government agencies to develop a coherent programme of actions to prevent elder abuse and neglect.

We are committed to developing actions that will:

- help people and families to build on their own strengths and have healthy relationships
- train all the people who come into contact with families that experience violence so that they can better screen, help, and refer
- improve the child protection system so that contact with government agencies leads to effective services for children and better outcomes for families
- involve all family members in stopping violence in their family relationships
- provide people with information and practical strategies to help themselves and others to resolve family conflict in non-violent and non-abusive ways.



## 2. Leadership

*Chapter 2 sets out what we are doing to lead family violence prevention work. It outlines:*

- *our ongoing role*
- *how we will ensure our actions are relevant and effective for all of New Zealand's families, whānau and communities*
- *how our programme of action will be implemented*
- *the need to learn from what works.*

## 2. Leadership

WE ARE WORKING TO ENCOURAGE LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS TO END FAMILY VIOLENCE AND PROMOTE STABLE, HEALTHY FAMILIES.

Leadership is needed – within families and communities, across the business, government and non-government sectors, and at the political level – if we are going to transform our society into one that does not tolerate family violence. We all need to take responsibility for preventing the abuse and neglect of children, violence between partners, the abuse and neglect of older people, violence by children against their parents and violence between siblings. We also need to get better at identifying what works to prevent family violence and what does not.

Collaboration will happen at many levels in the community sector, through national family violence prevention networks and through mainstream family support agencies. The Taskforce will be working to engage the leadership of many of our communities of interest, faith communities, sporting communities and cultural communities. Our ability to lead and co-ordinate actions across the public sector will be enhanced when the Chief Executives of Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Secretary for Education join the Taskforce.



*We also need to get better at identifying what works to prevent family violence...*



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# National Leadership and Implementing this Programme of Action

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**AS A GROUP THE TASKFORCE IS PROVIDING LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR.**

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## Why we're doing this

The Taskforce is a significant commitment by the government and non-government sectors, independent Crown entities and the judiciary to work together to end family violence and promote stable, healthy families.

Because Taskforce membership is at chief executive level we can ensure that improvements are swiftly implemented across government agencies.

We will also continue to support the Government in its leadership role.

## What we're doing

The Taskforce is providing leadership across the public sector and to the public at large. We will ensure:

- our actions are relevant and effective for all of New Zealand's families, whānau and communities
- our programme of action is successfully implemented
- ongoing learning by all those working in the family violence area.

## When we're doing it

### July 2006

- This first Taskforce report is presented to the Family Violence Ministerial Team, which comprises:
  - Minister for Social Development and Employment (Chair)
  - Minister of Education
  - Minister of Police
  - Minister of Health
  - Minister of Justice
  - Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment (CYF)
  - Minister of Women's Affairs
  - the Chairperson of the Open Hearing into the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children.

### July 2006 to June 2007

- We will oversee and monitor the implementation of our programme of action.
- We will continue to advise the Government on further actions needed to end family violence and on ways to encourage and support local, regional and national leadership on this critical issue. The knowledge and experience of communities and existing service providers will directly inform the development of new, or the expansion of existing, programmes. This approach is at the heart of the campaign to reduce society's tolerance of family violence and prevent damaging behaviour within families.
- We will draw on the advice of Māori and Pacific advisory groups who will:
  - ensure that Māori and Pacific perspectives on family violence prevention are taken into account at the strategic level in design and implementation of our actions
  - ensure through robust processes of consultation and inclusion that our actions are culturally relevant and effective for whānau, iwi and Pacific peoples; and contribute to reviewing progress and identifying what works.
- We will make sure migrant and refugee perspectives are taken account of in our work and that what we do is effective for these groups.
- Government agencies have responsibility for specific actions, and will advise us on their progress and identify what is and is not working as actions are implemented. We will work with them on aligning their business planning with our vision and programme of action.
- We will continue to meet as a Taskforce until June 2007, when we will review our role and advise the Government on:
  - future leadership and collaboration arrangements
  - the implementation of our first programme of action
  - what further action is needed to end family violence.

# Learning From What Works

**DURING THE NEXT YEAR IT IS CRUCIAL THAT WE LEARN RAPIDLY BOTH FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROGRAMME OF ACTION AND FROM WORK ALREADY GOING ON IN COMMUNITIES.**

## **LEAD AGENCIES:**

**Families Commission, Ministry of Social Development, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and other Taskforce agencies and the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse.**

## Why we're doing this

We need to get smarter about how we use the information we have on preventing family violence, and identify what works to prevent family violence and what does not. In addition we need to improve the links between people, communities and organisations so that what we know about what is working is shared and translated into action on the ground.

## What we're doing

We will use the information and infrastructure provided by the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse to help us to identify where we need to build our knowledge of family violence and what works to prevent it.

We will put in place measures that:

- set the strategic direction of research into family violence prevention
- monitor the impact family violence prevention initiatives have on government and non-government organisations working in the family violence area
- help communities to learn from each other and service providers to share good practice
- co-ordinate research and evaluation
- address the gaps in our knowledge of family violence in New Zealand
- monitor the level of family violence in New Zealand
- evaluate this programme of action.

The Families Commission and ACC are making significant contributions to this work.

## When we're doing it

### July 2006 to June 2007

- We will work with and build on the efforts of the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse to share good practice and new research.
- The Families Commission has a three-year research work programme to improve our understanding of the nature of family violence and appropriate prevention strategies. Actions in the first year will include:
  - work to measure the level of family violence in New Zealand accurately
  - work on elder abuse prevention.
- ACC is providing seed funding in 2006-07 for innovative research and evaluation activities that increase our knowledge of effective family violence initiatives, with priority given to early intervention. ACC will work with key agencies to ensure the successful handover and national implementation of successful interventions. It will also contribute to research that improves our understanding of the magnitude of family violence and its underlying causes, and its links with other social problems.

*... we need to improve the links between people, communities and organisations so that what we know about what is working is shared...*



### 3. Changing Attitudes and Behaviour

*Chapter 3 outlines the actions we are taking to change attitudes and behaviour.*

### 3.

## Changing Attitudes and Behaviour

If we are to end violence within families, we need to reduce society's tolerance of violence and change people's damaging behaviour within families. We need to condemn violence whenever and wherever it occurs. Too many women and children are dying; too many individuals and families are suffering. This means we must take action together – as families, as communities and as a nation to change attitudes and behaviour so that they do not support family violence.

## Nationwide Attitude and Behaviour Change Campaign

**WE ARE WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES ON A NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN TO CHANGE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR SO THEY DO NOT SUPPORT FAMILY VIOLENCE.**

### LEAD AGENCIES:

**Ministry of Social Development and the Families Commission**

### Why we're doing this

To eliminate family violence we need to transform our society into one that does not tolerate family violence but which explicitly encourages and fosters healthy relationships and families. Our campaign will begin the long-term changes in attitudes and behaviour that are needed to reduce society's tolerance of family violence and prevent damaging behaviour within families.

A successful and comprehensive campaign will build a sound understanding of the motivators, influencers and barriers to change, and design strategies and key messages to influence distinct behaviours and different audiences. These strategies will be implemented at the community, regional and national levels.

This campaign will be long term and phased sequentially to target different forms of family violence, based on good research and continuous evaluation.

### What we're doing

We are supporting:

- community-owned and driven family violence prevention initiatives
- national activities and actions to change prevailing attitudes and behaviour that contribute to family violence
- national activities and actions that encourage healthy stable relationships.

This work is being led by the Ministry of Social Development and the Families Commission, working in consultation with ACC, the Ministry of Health, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the National Collective of Women's Refuges, the National Network of Stopping Violence Services, Jigsaw (formerly Child Abuse Prevention Services) and other government and non-government organisations.

The Government provided \$11.5 million over four years in Budget 2006 for the campaign. The Families Commission is contributing \$2.5 million over three years towards the campaign.

Initial activities will focus on changing the attitudes and behaviour of men who are violent towards their partners; future activities will focus on parents who abuse and neglect their children and families who abuse and neglect older members.

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## Community-owned and -driven initiatives

Government and community organisations are working together to identify where and how to build on the good work already going on in communities to prevent family violence. Communities and non-government organisations have a wealth of knowledge and experience in this work. Communities will receive funding and other resources to target and change the attitudes and behaviour in their communities that lead to family violence.

## National activities and action

We will support leadership at all levels and across all sectors to promote public education and awareness. We will use research to develop key communication strategies and messages aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour to promote healthy relationships and discourage violence. These strategies will outline actions, including the plan for a mass media campaign, through to 2010.

## Central support and co-ordination

We have established a small team to co-ordinate and develop resources to support the campaign, and work with people and organisations involved in family violence prevention in communities on the overall strategy.

Resources already available to communities and organisations include:

- the Family Violence Community Action Toolkit, which has information on collaboration, planning, evaluation and media management available at <http://www.nzfvc.org.nz/communityaction/>
- media kits and training for community groups on placing key family violence prevention messages in local media
- seminars on family violence for trainee journalists and family violence prevention resources for journalists.

## When we're doing it

### July 2006

- We are finishing the first stage of our research to understand how to change perpetrator behaviour.
- We are developing partnerships with national organisations to build their capacity to prevent family violence.

### By December 2006

By December 2006, we will:

- identify communities with existing family violence prevention programmes and initiatives and put a funding process in place
- identify communities without family violence prevention strategies and provide support for them through community development and training in areas including social marketing, media management, information about what works for supporting families, best practice and how to evaluate what works
- develop key messages and influencers for changing the attitudes of male perpetrators of intimate partner violence
- establish a national leadership group to promote public education and awareness within different sectors
- identify opportunities for building the capacity of national non-government organisations to support family violence prevention.

### 2007/2008 and beyond

In early 2007:

- communities will begin to receive additional funding for family violence prevention initiatives
- the overall strategy for the campaign will be developed and an implementation plan developed through to 2010
- key messages will be rolled out at local and national level as part of the campaign.

# Reviews of Family Violence-related Deaths

**WE ARE DEVELOPING A NEW PROCESS TO UNDERSTAND WHY FAMILY VIOLENCE DEATHS OCCUR SO THAT WE CAN MAKE CHANGES TO SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES AND PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS.**

**LEAD AGENCY**  
**Ministry of Health**

## Why we're doing this

Too many New Zealanders die from family violence: in 2005, just under half of the 61 murders in New Zealand were recorded as family violence-related. We need to build a better understanding of the circumstances that lead to family violence-related deaths, but there is no mechanism to examine them systematically. A consistent process will help government agencies, service providers and communities to form a better understanding of how and why deaths occur, so that we can change attitudes, systems and practices and prevent further deaths.



## What we're doing

A two-phased project to develop an ongoing process for reviewing family violence-related deaths will be undertaken. The Ministry of Health will take leadership of this work in August 2006. The first phase is a research-based review of existing family violence death data, which will help us identify changes that can be made to current systems and processes, and inform the development of new family violence risk assessment tools. The review will also inform the development of an ongoing system for reviewing family violence-related deaths. The two-phased development process is similar to the approach taken in the United Kingdom, which resulted in the passing of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

The Police, the Ministry of Health, non-government organisations, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the Families Commission and the judiciary will contribute to, and comment on, both phases of the project.

## When we're doing it

### From April 2007

- The Ministry of Health will identify improvements to be addressed by government and non-government organisations.

### By June 2007

- The Ministry of Health will design an ongoing process for reviewing all family violence-related deaths.



## 4. Ensuring Safety and Accountability

*Chapter 4 describes the comprehensive range of actions we are taking to improve the justice sector's response to family violence.*

## 4.

# Ensuring Safety and Accountability

We need to ensure that people affected by family violence are safe and those responsible for it are accountable for their actions and do not re-offend. We will achieve this through:

- a responsive justice sector that ensures the safety of victims and enforces sanctions against family violence
- people taking responsibility for their own and their family's behaviour
- ensuring that children who are victims of violence within their families or live with the trauma of violence between family members are kept safe and given the help they need to recover.

Co-ordinated actions that ensure safety can help those families who want violence in the relationship to stop but who do not want the relationship itself to end. This includes keeping the victims safe, providing non-violence programmes for men as a first measure, providing separate programmes for victims, conducting therapeutic work with the family when it is safe to do so, and ensuring the perpetrator completes court-imposed sanctions.

## Improving Justice Sector Responses to Family Violence

**WE ARE IMPROVING HOW COURTS; POLICE; CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY; THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND PROGRAMME PROVIDERS WORK TOGETHER TO:**

- **KEEP VICTIMS AND FAMILIES SAFE**
- **STOP RE-OFFENDING AND HOLD PERPETRATORS TO ACCOUNT**
- **ENSURE PEOPLE GET EASY ACCESS TO THE SUPPORT THEY NEED.**

### LEAD AGENCIES

**Ministries of Justice, Social Development and Women's Affairs, and New Zealand Police.**

## Why we're doing this

The justice sector is a key part of how the Government responds to acts of family violence. It is central to ensuring the safety of victims, holding offenders accountable and stopping re-offending. It is also a significant source of support and assistance for those affected by family violence and an important way for the community to signal that it considers violent and neglectful acts are unacceptable.

The justice sector must respond effectively to the needs of victims of family violence in ways that work for the victims and promotes their long-term safety and well-being. We want to ensure that those who engage with the justice system receive straightforward access to effective services that address their needs.

The justice sector comprises:

- Ministry of Justice
- New Zealand Police
- Child, Youth and Family

- Department of Corrections (including probation services)
- non-government organisation programme providers.

The justice sector offers several direct points of contact with family violence victims. In particular, the Family and District Courts respond directly to acts of family violence and may often be the first place people go for support and assistance. The justice sector is also the place where perpetrators are held formally to account for their actions.

We are focusing on improving how government and non-government agencies can work together to effectively meet the needs of individuals and families affected by family violence. We are also focusing on ensuring that government agencies do not work in ways that make it harder for people to get access to the services and support they need when dealing with family violence.



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## What we're doing

Government agencies and non-governmental organisations will continue to work together to improve the ability of the justice sector to keep victims safe and to stop re-offending. We have identified two priorities:

- meeting the needs of victims, offenders and their families
- improving the systems and processes used by agencies.

We have developed a comprehensive set of actions to start improving the way the justice sector deals with these issues. We are committed to making the best use of the justice sector agencies to prevent family violence and to give people the help and support they need if it occurs. Children and young people in particular may need assistance whether they experience violence directly or live with the trauma of violence between family members.

### Meeting the needs of victims, offenders and their families

To ensure that the justice sector meets the needs of victims, offenders and their families, it is important that they:

- know how the justice system can help them
- have the support they need to get access to the services of the courts
- can get easy access to the services of the courts
- understand what is happening when they are involved in a process
- are safe when they are using court services
- are held accountable if they have not complied with court orders.

To make this happen we will, as a matter of priority, address issues relating to:

- information about the services available from the justice sector. We will do this by:
  - ensuring victims know what services are available and how they can get access to those services for themselves and their children
- access to the services available from the justice sector. We will do this by:
  - promoting access to the legal services required to obtain protection orders
  - ensuring adequate interpretation services are available for those using the court system

- support for victims of family violence. We will do this by:
  - supporting those using the justice sector to ensure that their needs are effectively met and that they know what assistance is available to them
  - ensuring the victims of family violence, including children and adolescents, have access to programmes to help meet their needs
- effectiveness of court orders. We will do this by:
  - improving the safety of victims granted protection orders by enhancing the ability of police to act when an order is breached
  - taking effective action if offenders fail to comply with court orders to attend therapeutic programmes
- access to programmes. We will do this by:
  - having programmes that meet the needs of the full range of victims and offenders and that judges are aware of all relevant services
  - allowing perpetrators and victims to be able to self-refer to free programmes without a court referral
- effectiveness of programmes. We will do this by:
  - monitoring attendance and performance of offenders at court-ordered programmes, including making sure offenders participate actively in programmes.

### Systems and processes used by agencies

It is important that systems and processes used by agencies are efficient and effective and help all agencies work closely together. We have identified several issues that we will work on together to improve the systems and processes we use. In the first instance we have focused on the court system and identified issues that relate to:

- comprehensive family violence data:
  - The Ministry of Justice; Child, Youth and Family; the Department of Corrections and Police will collect and manage family violence data in ways so information does not get lost between agencies. We will make sure agencies can efficiently and safely share information so it is available at the right time.
- training and support for those working with the victims, offenders and their families:
  - The Ministry of Justice; Child, Youth and Family; Department of Corrections and Police will make sure their staff who work with victims, offenders and their families have training about the legislation relating to family violence. Training

will also be provided on the dynamics of family violence, and how to best support the victims of family violence and support them in their dealings with the justice sector. This training will help them identify indicators of family violence and will be extended to agencies such as Housing New Zealand, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education.

- clarity of information about the roles of each agency within the justice sector:
  - Those who need to use the justice sector will get information about what assistance is available and how to get access to it.
  - The Ministry of Justice, Police and the Department of Corrections will work together to make their policies consistent and to support each other to best meet the needs of victims, offenders and their families.
- improving the effectiveness of the domestic violence legislation:
  - The Ministry of Justice will develop information about protection orders in the languages of the significant ethnic groups in our community. This information will take into account the cultural norms of these ethnic groups, and will be free.
- enforcement of protection orders:
  - The Police will ensure that breaches of protection orders are dealt with appropriately and that offenders and perpetrators are referred to appropriate services and providers.
- court processes:
  - The Ministry of Justice will work to remove delays in Family Court proceedings and to streamline court systems to ensure prompt resolution of cases involving family violence.

## When we're doing it

### July 2006 to June 2007

Between July 2006 and June 2007, the Taskforce will ensure that the review of the Domestic Violence Act (1995) enhances the ability of agencies and courts to share information in a way that promotes the safety and wellbeing of victims and their families.

**Between July 2006 and June 2007, justice sector agencies will take the following actions to better meet the needs of victims, offenders and their families.**

#### ***The Ministry of Justice will:***

- ensure that the victims of family violence know what support and services are available
- maximise safety factors when managing court rosters
- increase the threshold for eligibility for legal aid for Orders under the Domestic Violence Act (1995). The Legal Services Regulations 2006 and the Legal Services Amendment Act 2006 will start on 1 March 2007. This legislation will significantly increase legal aid eligibility thresholds. There will be a 40% increase in the pool of people eligible for legal aid; that is an increase from 765,000 to approximately 1.2 million. A review of provider remuneration rates will also start in March 2007
- improve information provided by the courts about Legal Aid Services.

***The Legal Services Agency*** is testing a system of fixed fees for most family legal aid cases (including domestic violence matters). The field test started in February 2006 and the initial results are being evaluated.

#### ***The Ministry of Social Development will:***

- build safe and effective programmes for couples and families in addition to the existing programmes for victims and perpetrators (in consultation with the non-government sector and the Ministry of Justice)
- build the capacity of interpreters in the courts (jointly with the Ministry of Justice).

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**The Ministry of Women's Affairs**, in consultation with the Ministry of Justice, will:

- investigate the introduction of advocates in courts to help people get information and access to the full range of support and services available to them by scoping what would be required to:
  - define the role advocates would have
  - establish advocates
  - obtain funding
  - identify locations
  - provide wraparound services.

**Between July 2006 and June 2007, the justice sector agencies will take the following actions to improve the systems and processes used by agencies.**

**The Ministry of Justice will:**

- enhance the ability of courts to contact victims directly
- review purchasing plans for programmes
- improve processes for prosecutions for non-attendance at programmes
- establish three dedicated Family Violence Courts in the Wellington region and one in Auckland
- evaluate the existing models of dedicated Family Violence Courts in Waitakere and Manukau
- establish a forum to identify best practice for effective information exchange between government agencies and communities, and between the District Court and the Family Court within existing legislation.

**The Ministry of Social Development** will enable appropriate sharing of information specific to child victims and witnesses to family violence (jointly with Police).

**The Police** will:

- improve the enforcement of protection orders and the safety of victims by developing:
  - training to improve investigation of breaches and the effectiveness of risk assessments undertaken at the time of breaches
  - appropriate performance measures for police and prosecutors
  - better co-ordinated investigation and prosecution policies to improve the rate of successful prosecution for breaches of protection orders.

**The Principal Family Court Judge** is working with the Law Society to provide professional support and training programmes for lawyers working in family violence-related areas.

### 2007/2008 and beyond

The Taskforce has identified additional actions to enhance the capacity of the justice sector which it will address in 2007 and beyond. The actions and the agencies responsible are:

- define medium- to long-term options to improve the sharing of information between agencies and between the District Court and Family Court (Ministry of Justice)
- simplify the application form for protection orders (Ministry of Justice)
- improve the use of security resources available to the courts (Ministry of Justice)
- consider the merit of establishing a publicly funded office to provide legal services specific to Domestic Violence Act applicants (the Ministry of Justice as liaison agency with the Legal Services Agency)
- determine the level of attendance and performance of perpetrators at existing programmes (Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with Police and Ministry of Social Development) and develop options to ensure perpetrators attend and complete programmes (Ministry of Justice).

We have also agreed on several other actions, and the agencies responsible for them:

- where appropriate, provide perpetrators or suspected perpetrators with information on relevant support agencies and programmes to stop violence that are available in the areas where the perpetrators live (Police)
- work with community groups to make better use of interpreters in court processes (Ministries of Social Development and Justice)
- ensure the range of programmes matches the profiles of perpetrators (Department of Corrections).

## Local Case Co-ordination

**WE ARE DEVELOPING A NEW NATIONWIDE SCHEME TO BETTER SUPPORT CHILDREN AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE AND BUILD STRONGER LINKS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN COMMUNITIES.**

### LEAD AGENCIES

**New Zealand Police, non-government organisations and Child, Youth and Family**

### Why we're doing this

Local schemes that co-ordinate government and non-government agencies' responses to family violence already exist in some areas in New Zealand. We are committed to learning from what is working. Agencies are currently drawing lessons from several schemes, including one in Hamilton that has operated for several years where daily co-ordination meetings are run between the Police and other government and non-government organisations to enable local case management of family violence reports. Cases deemed serious are followed up by the Police or notified to Child, Youth and Family. All others are followed up by non-government organisations. Other places, such as the Wairarapa and Gisborne, operate similar approaches which, although there are some significant variations, all recognise the importance of local agency case management in supporting a co-ordinated response. In addition, there are other promising initiatives such as child crisis teams providing support to child witnesses following family violence.

### What we're doing

We are establishing a nationwide scheme to build stronger, more effective, working relationships between Police, Child, Youth and Family, and other government and non-government organisations in communities. The scheme will help to ensure that the children identified by the Police as living in homes where family violence occurs receive the help and support they need. This may include intensive, wraparound services for families.

The scheme will be based on regular meetings between agencies to review and co-ordinate how family violence cases are handled. It will build on the mechanisms local communities already have in place.

### When we're doing it

The roll-out of the scheme will begin in September 2006.

*We are establishing a nationwide scheme to build stronger, more effective, working relationships ...*



## 5. Effective Support Services

*Chapter 5 describes what we are doing to improve service capacity and capability of government and non-government organisations working in the family violence area.*

## 5.

# Effective Support Services

It is important that victims of family violence receive effective and appropriate services at the time at which they need them. It encompasses crisis services that hold offenders accountable and look after victims, and services that, beyond the crisis, help people repair their lives. There also need to be services that address behaviour and attitudes of perpetrators to stop their violence.

This continuum of services will be required for children, women, older people and men affected by family violence, across all forms of family violence.

These services will rely particularly on non-government organisations and other community-based organisations to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of victims and change the behaviour of perpetrators of family violence. These interventions need to be backed up by statutory agencies with a responsibility for family violence, including Police; Courts; Child, Youth and Family; District Health Boards and by Ministries such as Health, Social Development, Justice and Education.

Developing services that create positive and healthy relationships so violence does not occur is the purpose of this section of the report.

Many non-government organisations and community-based services need considerable investment to provide truly effective services. They also need to be locally responsive so that we are developing services that engage particular communities, especially hard to reach families where violence is prevalent, while also maintaining national organisations that meet the needs of victims across the country.

These services will ensure that:

- families affected by family violence are adequately housed
- adults are supported to stay in or get back into the workforce
- people get help with factors that put them at risk of violence; for example, depression, heavy drinking and drug abuse
- children are supported to stay in school and receive a good education
- all family members contribute to and enjoy healthy and productive relationships
- victims are supported to make positive decisions about, and empowered to take control of, their lives.

Some rationalisation of services may be required over time to achieve sustainable and effective pathways for non-government organisations and community-based responses. This will be done in collaboration with the non-government sector to ensure that it is based on best practice and on evidence of what works for victims and for changing perpetrator behaviour.

Political leaders, community leaders, government agencies, non-government organisations and families are all important in making this happen. Our first steps will be to make sure the services and supports we have now are working as well as they can. The major actions we are taking are to improve the speed and effectiveness of the justice system, and to improve the funding base of the non-government sector.

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# Improving Family Violence Service Capacity and Capability

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**AS AN IMMEDIATE PRIORITY WE NEED TO ENSURE SERVICE PROVIDERS WORKING IN FAMILY VIOLENCE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR SERVICES.**

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## LEAD AGENCIES

**Ministry of Social Development and Child, Youth and Family**

## Why we're doing this

A strong non-government sector is essential to responding effectively to family violence, as it can respond quickly to emerging family and community needs, and provide appropriate, accessible and responsive services that can engage vulnerable families. A range of services is needed, including crisis support, therapeutic programmes, education and long-term support to help people with jobs and housing and to get the education they need.

Our vision is that sustainable funding, effective services and strong relationships between the government and the non-government sector will improve service capacity and capability and lead to an even better response to families affected by violence.

The main issues we are working to address are:

- the need for funding to keep pace with the demand for services, increasing expectations of professionalism and service effectiveness, and rising costs of service delivery – current funding levels do not cover administration, staff training, networking and collaboration, infrastructural development and input into policy development and initiative implementation
- the competitive funding model, which works against effective collaboration, information sharing and service co-ordination
- the current funding approach, which struggles to respond to emerging needs, and the description of services in contracts, which does not always reflect the reality of service delivery
- the need for organisations that work with Māori, Pacific peoples and other identifiable communities to be resourced or supported sufficiently to enhance the cultural practices and needs of their communities in ways that promote safe families.

## What we're doing

The non-government and government sectors need to work together to improve family violence service capacity and capability and build on work that is under way. Our work is part of a broader government programme being led by the Ministry of Social Development to support non-government family support service providers to strengthen their capacity to meet an increased demand for services.

As a first step towards putting the non-government sector on a sustainable footing, the Government is investing \$9 million over the next four years. This recognises that funding has not kept pace with the demand for services over the past 10 years. Further investment is needed to ease the pressure on providers and put the non-government sector on sustainable funding so that services can meet the needs of families into the future.

The Ministry of Social Development is reviewing the models used for funding non-government services by Family and Community Services and Child, Youth and Family. The Ministry of Social Development will work with non-government organisations to develop a new funding model that ensures the appropriate use of grants, contributory funding and full funding and that also brings practice into line with the Treasury's *Guidelines for Contracting with Non-Government Organisations for Services Sought by the Crown*. Integrated contracts will continue to be promoted where this reduces compliance costs and establishes ways of supporting collaboration, information sharing and service co-ordination.

To achieve sustainable funding for non-government service providers, the Ministry of Social Development will work with the sector on the best approach to costing non-government family support services. We are working towards adequate and sustainable funding for these services.

The Ministry of Social Development will review the service-costing approaches of key funding agencies and non-government organisations to identify any gaps and inconsistencies and will work with the sector to develop a costing tool to accurately determine the true costs of family violence services and family (including child) support services. The tool will be used by non-government providers and government funders to inform funding decisions.

Strengthening the non-government sector through adequate funding for service provision will help build on existing workforce and organisational development. The non-government sector will be able to address its own infrastructure needs; for example, with governance issues, quality of service and staff recruitment, retention and training.

## When we're doing it

We will continue to work with the Government to provide sustainable funding and support for non-government service providers to address their own capacity issues.

### July 2006 to June 2007

The Ministry of Social Development and non-government organisations will work together to:

- review current funding models and develop a new model that ensures the appropriate use of grants, contributory funding and full funding
- cost family violence and family support services
- build on existing workforce and organisational development initiatives
- continue to promote the use of integrated contracts.

*Strengthening the non-government sector through adequate funding for service provision ...*





# Conclusion

# Conclusion

We have begun a new phase in New Zealand's efforts to eliminate family violence. We believe our programme of action and the good work already being done by community-based organisations, iwi and the Government will make significant inroads into dealing with this difficult and complex issue.

We need sustained commitment over the long term to achieve our vision that

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**All families and whānau have healthy, respectful, stable relationships, free from violence.**

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We need long-term commitment from leaders at all levels and across all communities. Our work on the Taskforce, with its involvement of government agencies, community organisations, the judiciary, the Children's Commissioner and Chief Families Commissioner, has shown that it is critical that we all work together.

We rely on the continuing commitment of service providers, communities and families themselves to eliminate child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and elder abuse and neglect. We must all play our part.

We will continue "learning our way forward". We will build on our understanding of the effectiveness of our actions, and we will search out new ideas to enrich the work we have begun. The outcomes of our work will be demonstrable and measurable, and we will be held accountable for them.

The actions we take will be flexible and fit the needs of individuals and families in their community and cultural contexts. This will require investment in new actions and more investment in what we know works. It will require new ways of working together. We have to move past polarisation to mutual trust and commitment.

We will report in 2007 on:

- our achievements in the delivery of our programme of action
- the impact our work has had
- how we will build on what we have learnt in our first year
- the new initiatives that hold promise for the future.

Concerted effort by all will be required to turn things around for the better. We ask you for your help in achieving this.

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# A Summary of Family Violence Prevention in New Zealand

*This section provides a summary of  
family violence and family violence  
prevention in New Zealand.*

# A Summary of Family Violence Prevention in New Zealand

## Family Violence in New Zealand

The high incidence and human cost of family violence in New Zealand is unacceptable.

New Zealand's rates of child abuse and neglect, levels of domestic violence, deaths of children and women, and the rate of elder abuse are shameful.

Violence can undermine and destroy individuals' sense of their own worth and a family's ability to look after and support its members. Eliminating family violence will:

- help families to thrive and ensure that all children get the best possible start in life and reach their full potential
- empower women and men who currently experience and perpetuate family violence to make positive decisions about their lives
- improve health, education and employment in New Zealand
- reduce the burden placed on our health, justice and family support services.

Family violence covers a broad range of damaging and controlling behaviours, usually of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature, which typically involve fear, intimidation and emotional deprivation. This is most commonly explained as involving power dynamics that lead one person to be in control; for example, men over women and adults over children.

*Family violence covers a broad range of damaging and controlling behaviours...*

*Te Rito New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy* identifies the different forms of family violence as:

- abuse and neglect of children by an adult
- violence between adult partners
- abuse and neglect of older people
- violence perpetrated by a child against a parent
- violence between siblings.

Family violence impacts on the lives of thousands of New Zealanders.

- In 2005, 29 of 61 murders were recorded as family violence-related.
- In 2005, New Zealand Police recorded 62,470 offence and non-offence incidents involving family/whānau violence, at which 62,615 children and young people under the age of 17 were involved.
- Between July 2004 and June 2005, Child, Youth and Family received 53,097 notifications, 43,460 of which required further action. Data for the previous four years indicates that just less than a third of client investigations have substantiated abuse findings.\*
- In 2005, Women's Refuge supported 17,212 women and 9,904 children.
- Between 2000 and 2004 (inclusive) 121 family violence-related murders were recorded. This included 56 women, 26 men and 39 children. Fifty-four women were murdered by men, and three men were murdered by women. Twenty-six of the child victims were murdered by men and 15 were murdered by women.\*\*

\* Not all abuse findings relate to family violence. Some will be a result of abuse by other adults who have responsibility for children, eg child minders, creche workers, teachers, church groups, sports groups. Child, Youth and Family/Police are involved in these cases at least until it is established that families can provide ongoing protection.

\*\* Not an official New Zealand Police statistic. Obtained from data relating to cases investigated as homicide.

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- There is little local research on elder abuse and neglect, but a United Nations study on elder abuse and neglect in developed countries suggests that up to 50,000 older New Zealanders may experience abuse and neglect.

Research tells us that:

- the risk of a child homicide diminishes with age. Men are responsible for two-thirds of the deaths of children aged 0 to 14. Children under the age of one are at greatest risk of being killed, with both mothers and fathers equally represented as perpetrators
- perpetrators of the most severe and lethal cases of family violence are predominantly male
- victims of the most severe and lethal cases of family violence are predominantly women and children
- men who abuse their partners are more likely to also abuse their children
- family violence is a problem affecting families from all cultures, classes, backgrounds and socio-economic circumstances
- Māori are significantly over-represented as both victims and perpetrators of violence in families and whānau
- violence is often a deliberate act, used by perpetrators as a means of asserting domination, power and control over others
- the most common forms of elder abuse and neglect seem to be psychological abuse followed by financial abuse, and the majority of abusers are family members.

## Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families

The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families was established in June 2005 to advise the Family Violence Ministerial Team on how to make improvements to the way family violence is addressed, and to eliminate family violence in New Zealand.

Family violence is a critical and complex social issue. It occurs in private, within close interpersonal relationships. Eliminating family violence requires co-ordinated, multi-level action over a number of years – no intervention will work for everyone, and no government department, court or community organisation can prevent family violence in isolation. We need a long-term integrated suite of actions at national and local levels. We also need to keep people well-informed about what works, and put people in touch with others working in their field.

The Taskforce is a partnership that brings together the people, organisations, sectors and institutions that need to work together to prevent family violence. We are building on the work carried out under *Te Rito, New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy* (2002). The Taskforce provides a forum for the government and non-government sectors, the judiciary, the Children's Commissioner and the Families Commission to come together and set the strategic direction for family violence prevention in New Zealand.

Eliminating family violence is a significant priority within the Government's *Families – Young and Old* theme. The programme of action set out by the Taskforce is a major contribution to the Government's drive to achieve strong families and strong communities. It is part of the co-ordinated range of services aimed at:

- supporting families and giving New Zealand children the best start in life
- supporting New Zealand women's emotional and economic independence
- supporting young people's transition into adulthood so that they have a sense of personal worth and feel that they deserve to have strong, loving relationships
- ending intergenerational violence
- ensuring vulnerable children are protected and cared for
- ensuring the safety of all victims of family violence
- preventing youth offending
- reducing criminal offending.

The Government has launched a comprehensive range of actions to improve individuals' and families' economic security and development opportunities. The Taskforce's programme of action complements these actions, which include Working for Families, The Early Years Approach and improvements to the child protection system.

Working for Families is a package of financial assistance for low- and middle-income families. It will help reduce child poverty, support parents into work and ease financial pressure on many families.

The Early Years Approach provides the opportunity to change the life-course of children at risk of poor health, education and social outcomes, including criminal offending. It focuses on providing services and supports for families raising young children so that all children get the best start in life. The Early Years Approach builds on universally available services to provide targeted services for children and their families with additional needs and intensive remedial services when children continue to be vulnerable to poor outcomes.

Care and protection services seek to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people by supporting and assisting families to keep their children safe.

Prevention best happens through the development of skills and knowledge that build the capacity of individuals and families to get the best from life, and to cope with difficult circumstances when they occur.

Key Government spending on preventing family violence in Budget 2006 included:

- \$11.5 million over four years to change prevailing attitudes towards violence and abusive behaviour
- \$9 million over four years for the non-government organisation family violence sector
- \$14.8 million over four years to continue the Strategies with Kids – Information for Parents (SKIP), which teaches positive parenting and alternatives to physical discipline
- \$7.5 million over four years to expand the Youth Transition Service, which gives communities resources to help at-risk school leavers
- \$10 million (over four years) for community-based services in South Auckland (Mangere, Otahuhu and Otara) to respond to youth gang issues there.

Other government initiatives to support strong families include income-related rents for state housing tenants; improvements in quality, affordable childcare; expansion of Well Child services (which prepare, educate and support families to help ensure their children remain healthy and thrive physically, emotionally and mentally); and free doctor's visits for young children.

People across New Zealand working in communities, community organisations, non-government organisations and government agencies contribute greatly to providing the setting and services to support families/whānau and the actions arising from the *Te Rito New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy*.

Over the next 12 months, we will maintain an overview of these and other government strategies, to ensure their goals and activities are complementary with our work.





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