



17 November 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 6 October 2025, requesting information about gender-based violence following a disaster event, and the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry's) coordination with the National Emergency Management Agency.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

- **Legal and Policy Framework:** *Are you aware of any laws or policies that specifically address the increased risk of gender-based violence in the aftermath of a disaster in New Zealand?*

There are no Ministry policies that address the increased risk of gender-based violence in the aftermath of a disaster in New Zealand.

- **Case Studies:** *Was the issue of increased GBV addressed in practice during and after the Canterbury earthquakes, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Cyclone Gabrielle/Auckland floods, and if so, how? We are particularly interested in the operational response.*

The Ministry is not aware of the issue of increased gender-based violence being addressed following any of the above-noted disasters.

- **Coordination:** *Is there a formal coordination mechanism between the MSD and NEMA during and after a disaster, at the regional and local levels? If so, could you please provide details on how this coordination is structured?*

The Ministry is connected to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEM) before, during and after disasters via a number of pathways.

As detailed in the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order 2015 (www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2015/0140/latest/dlm6485804.html), the Ministry is the lead coordinating agency for the Financial Assistance Sub-Function. The Ministry is also a supporting agency in the Needs Assessment, Shelter and Accommodation, and Psychological Sub-Functions, and is a member of the Welfare Coordination Group, all at both national and CDEM Group levels.

In addition, the Ministry is an active member of the National Recovery Coordination Group, and numerous working groups that have been established for specific projects, such as Catastrophic Event Planning.

- **MSD's Role:** Does your Ministry have a specific role in addressing family violence during and after disaster events?

The Ministry can activate programmes during an emergency response. Any programme or funding is in addition to services and support that is provided under the Social Security Act 2018 (SSA).

Depending on the event, and the scope and complexity of the response, the Ministry may reallocate resources to support response efforts, for example, distributing one-off funding to increase capacity of crisis support services to ensure they can meet an increase in demand for services.

- **Future Preparedness:** Based on your experience, do you have any suggestions on how New Zealand could better prepare for and respond to the increased risk of family violence from a legal and policy perspective? We are interested in ideas related to coordination platforms, training, communication strategies, emergency shelter setup, and the financing of family violence service providers, as well as any other relevant topics you may consider.

The main government agency for preventing family and sexual violence in New Zealand is The Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention (formerly Te Puna Aonui). This agency works with the Ministry and other government departments, iwi and communities to implement *Te Aorerekura* – the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence.

The Ministry contributes to this cross-government strategy through supporting policy development and funding prevention initiatives such as the Campaign for Action on Family Violence, E Tū Whānau, and Pasefika Proud. The Ministry also supports specialist services like refuges and harmful sexual behaviour programs, while ensuring culturally responsive, whānau-centred approaches.

This partnership enables coordinated action, shared accountability, and integrated support for people affected by violence, with future preparedness embedded in all aspects of this work to ensure systems remain responsive as it evolves.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

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