



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



Report summary: Improving access to family and sexual violence services

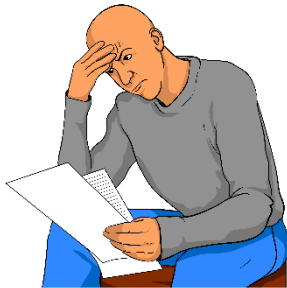


Published: August 2026

Before you start



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.

Some things you can do to make it easier are:



- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



What you will find in here

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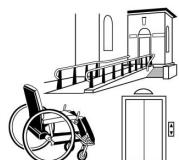
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About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is from the
**Ministry of Social Development –
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora.**



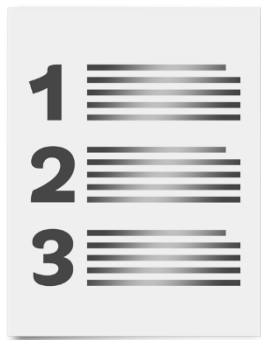
In this document the **Ministry of
Social Development – Te Manatū
Whakahiato Ora** will be called **MSD**.



Where it says **we / us** in this
document this means MSD.



This Easy Read is a **summary** of the
**Improving access to family and
sexual violence services report.**



A summary:

- is shorter than the main document
- tells you the important ideas.



The Improving access to family and sexual violence services report talks about:

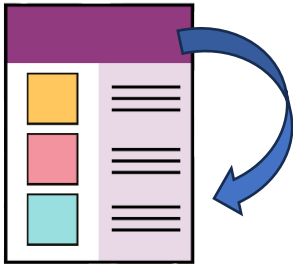
- the **accessibility** of family and sexual violence services
- how the **Accessibility Fund** was used.



Accessibility is when things can be used by everyone including disabled people.



In this document **family and sexual violence services** will be called **FVSV services** for short.



You can find more information about the **Accessibility fund** on **pages 10 to 14**.



In this document **Improving access to family and sexual violence services report** will be called **the Report**.

About the report



Disabled people and tāngata
whaikaha Māori experience more
violence than non-disabled people.



Evidence shows FVSV services:

- can be inaccessible
- do not meet the needs of disabled people.



Here **evidence** is information about something like:

- what people said
- things that happened
- records / files.





There is not enough:

- disability support
- people in the FVSV services **workforce** who know what to do for disabled people
- **data** on experiences of violence in the disability community.

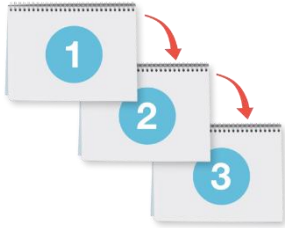
Workforce means all the people who work in the same kind of job like disability services.

Data is information that shows what groups of people:

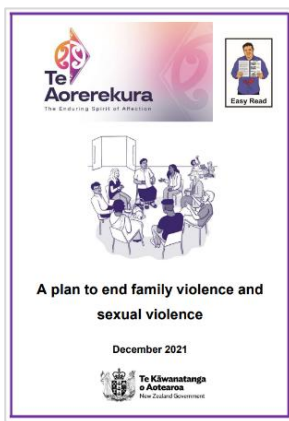
- are doing
- need.



MSD got over 3 million dollars in 2023 to start making FVSV services more accessible.



This funding was part of the strategy called **Te Aorerekura – National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence**.



You can find more information about **Te Aorerekura – National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence** at this **website**:

<https://preventfvsv.govt.nz/national-strategy>



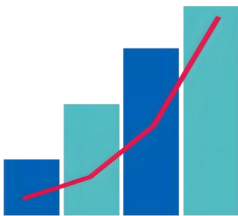
Some information at this website is in Easy Read.



MSD used the money to set up an Accessibility Fund.



The Accessibility Fund supported FVSV service providers to make their accessibility better.



The Accessibility Fund made ways to collect data on accessibility **barriers**.



A **barrier** is something that can make it harder for you to do something.



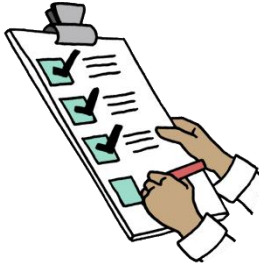
The data collected through the Accessibility Fund was used to write the Report.



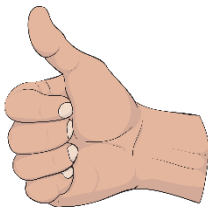
You can read the Report at this **website**:

www.msd.govt.nz/accessibilityfund

About the Accessibility Fund



The Accessibility Fund had 4 main **initiatives**.



An **initiative** is a thing being done to make something better.



Initiative 1

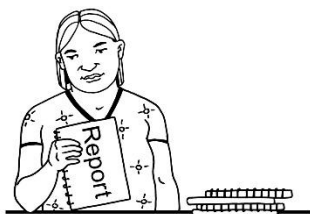
We gave FVSV service providers **accessibility assessments** to do.



Here an **accessibility assessment** is when someone checks the accessibility of things like:

- buildings
- information
- facilities like toilets.





Some FVSV service providers were then given reports on their accessibility.



This let FVSV service providers understand what they needed to do about accessibility.

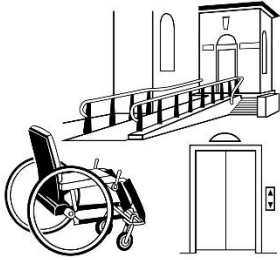


We also used the assessments to get data on FVSV service provider accessibility.



Initiative 2

We gave grants / money to FVSV service providers.



The money was used to make better:

- accessible buildings
- **digital** accessibility
- accessible information
- accessible **communication**.



Digital means things to do with:

- computers
- the internet.

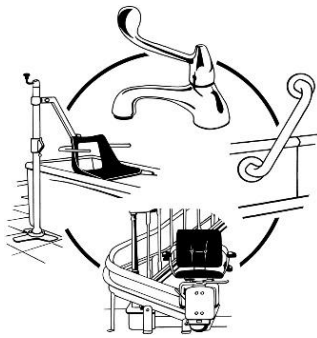


Here **communication** means giving people information using things like:

- email
- newsletters
- brochures.

44 FVSV service providers were given grants / money of up to 75 thousand dollars.

Initiative 3



3 **safe houses** were made **physically accessible** for:

- disabled people
- tāngata whaikaha Māori.



A **safe house** is a place people can live in for a while when they have been hurt by violence.



Physical means something to do with how your body moves.

A place being made **physically accessible** means people who have trouble moving can use it.



Initiative 4

We made a disability training programme for staff working in FVSV services.



The training was about:

- knowing about disability
- supporting disabled people.



The training included things like:

- understanding accessibility barriers
- how to support disabled people affected by:
 - family violence
 - sexual violence.



How we collected data



We collected data during the 4 initiatives including:

- information from 85 accessibility assessments done by FVSV service providers
- 44 service providers who got grants / money:
 - filled out questionnaires
 - were talked to in person
- 1 hundred and 21 people who took part in training did a survey.





Other data collected during the 4 initiatives included:

- information about how 3 safe houses were made accessible
- reports by **specialists** about the accessibility of 7 FVSV service providers.

A **specialist** is someone who knows a lot about something.

What we learned



There was not much information about the accessibility of FVSV service providers before we did this programme.



We found big gaps in FVSV service accessibility by looking at the data from:

- assessments
- reports
- questionnaires.



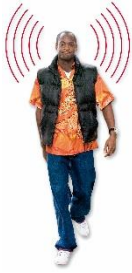


We found most FVSV services had many things disabled people could not use like:

- entrances / doors
- toilets
- parking
- lifts
- kitchens
- signs.



We found most FVSV service providers were not good for people with **sensory** needs.



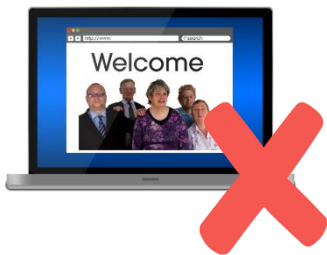
Sensory means things to do with:

- sight
- hearing
- touch.



We found most FVSV services have:

- digital barriers
- communication barriers.



These barriers include:

- inaccessible websites
- not enough accessible information.





We found most FVSV services do not:

- know enough about the accessibility needs of disabled people
- have enough training to support the needs of disabled people.



We found not many FVSV service providers have disability:

- policies / rules
- strategies / plans.

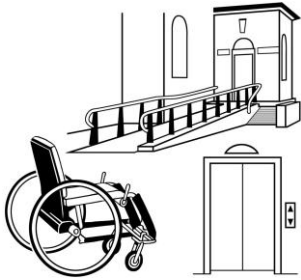


These barriers:

- make it harder for disabled people to access services
- might stop them from getting support.



How the Accessibility Fund has made services better



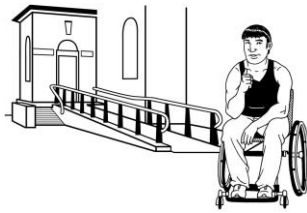
What people did with accessibility grants / money

Most FVSV service providers chose to do a mix of accessibility changes including:

- physical like changes to buildings
- digital like changes to websites
- information like changes to documents.



14 FVSV service providers put accessible toilets in their buildings.



11 FVSV service providers put accessible ramps into their buildings.

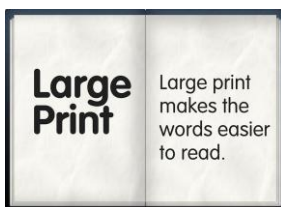
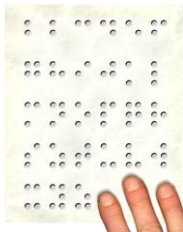


10 FVSV service providers put documents into **alternate formats**.

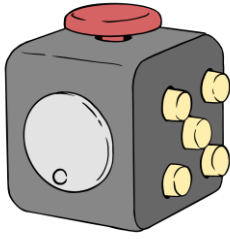


Alternate formats means:

- Easy Read
- New Zealand Sign Language / NZSL
- audio
- Braille
- Large Print.



24 FVSV service providers made accessible websites.



9 FVSV service providers got sensory items like:

- fidget tools
- lamps that can be made less bright.



We found these changes have made things better.



Taking away barriers has made FVSV services more:

- accessible
- **inclusive.**

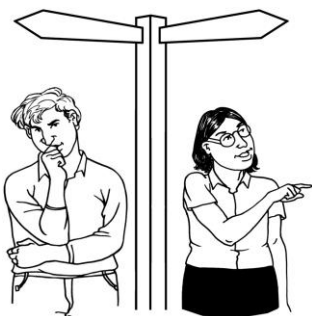


Inclusive means to include everyone.



FVSV service providers said disabled people:

- are more independent
- can make choices for themselves
- can access services the same as other people.



Making things better for the sensory needs of people has:

- made people less anxious
- let people take part more
- let people learn to trust staff.



Accessible websites with clear information has led to more **self-referrals**.



A **self-referral** is when a person chooses to use a service without someone from an organisation sending the referral.



Staff have been able to:

- do more work
- be better at their jobs.

Safe house accessibility

3 safe houses were made physically accessible in:

- Auckland
- Palmerston North
- Nelson.





To do this MSD worked with:

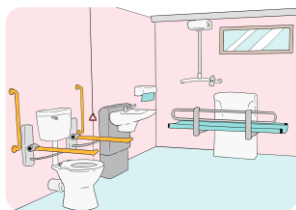
- Kāinga Ora
- **Women's refuges.**

Women's refuges are services women can use when they have been hurt by their:

- husband
- boyfriend
- partner.

We got data by:

- watching the changes being made to the houses
- talking with refuge staff.



The data gave us information about:

- what disabled women need
- what it takes to make a safe house accessible
- how much the work costs
- impact / what the changes mean to people who need them.

Changes made to the houses include accessible:

- kitchens
- bedrooms with turning space for wheelchairs
- bathrooms
- ramps at the front and back doors.



Accessible houses have made services better for women and children who need a safe place to get away from violence.

Some of the **outcomes** are:



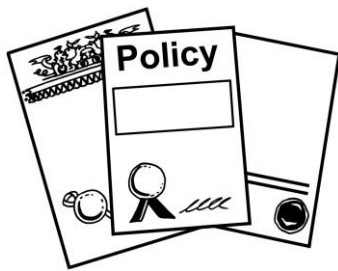
- disabled women:
 - are more independent
 - can do more on their own



- people are less anxious
- people trust the services more



- barriers about what people think about disabled people are removed.



Outcomes are how things turn out for people.

For example a disabled person would be able to do something easier if they have better accessibility.

Another outcome is that leaders think more about accessibility when making:

- policies
- budgets / money plans
- plans that go for a long time.



Workforce disability training

MSD got a training provider to make a workshop / training for FVSV service staff about supporting:

- disabled people
- tāngata whaikaha Māori.



1 hundred and 43 FVSV service staff did the workshop / training.



The staff who took part said they understand better how violence affects disabled people.



The data shows staff now know more about accessibility barriers like being able to understand:

- bad attitudes about disabled people
- **environmental barriers** for disabled people
- **institutional barriers** for disabled people.



Environmental barriers means problems for a disabled person like:

- having a house that is not accessible
- moving around their community is hard.





Institutional barriers means organisations are hard for a disabled person to:

- talk to
- use the services of.



The training has supported staff to:

- understand **bias**
- make bias happen less
- meet the needs of disabled people more.



Bias is when people treat others differently to someone else because of things like their disability.



The training has also supported staff to:

- understand the **culture** of people
- be confident in supporting disabled people.



Culture is a way of:

- thinking that a group shares
- doing things as a group.

Opportunities to make accessibility better



The Accessibility Fund has made progress on making FVSV services better in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We have good evidence about what:



- works
- needs to change to make FVSV services accessible.



There are 5 important things to think about when making FVSV services better for disabled people.



1. There are still big accessibility gaps

Many services do not have full:

- physical accessibility
- digital accessibility
- accessibility in:
 - communications
 - information.

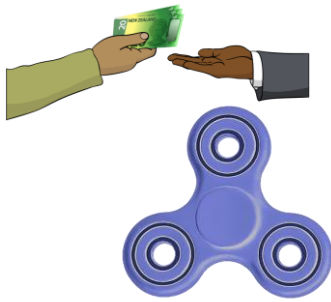


2. Providers want to make their services better

Service providers:

- think it is very important to make changes
- really want to make the changes.





3. Funding makes a real difference

Even a small amount of money put into things like fidget toys can make things better for a service.



4. Training is very important

It is important that the workforce can meet the different needs of:



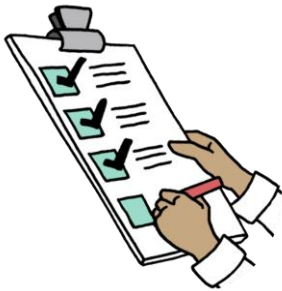
- disabled people
- tāngata whaikaha Māori.

5. Accessibility is work that carries on



Making services fully accessible takes:

- long-term planning
- **investment.**



Here **investment** means spending:

- money
- time
- effort.



This information has been written by the Ministry of Social Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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