

Government Response to the *Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Family Violence*

The Government welcomes the *Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Family Violence* and believes that the Report makes a significant contribution to the goal of reducing the serious harm that family violence causes to individuals, families, whānau, kāiga, communities and the country as a whole.

The *Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Family Violence* contains 22 recommendations to address family violence in New Zealand. These recommendations are grouped into three broad areas:

- structural reform
- research and information management
- streamlined service delivery, efficiency and partnerships.

This document sets out the Government Response to each recommendation, which are numbered based on the order that they appear in the *Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Family Violence*.

EAG recommendation	Government Response
Structural Reform	
<p><i>Rec 1:</i> The Government pass new legislation (the Prevention and Protection from Family Violence Act) reflecting the view of the Government and the community that family violence/domestic violence in all its form is unacceptable and is an intolerable violation of human rights</p>	<p>The Government agrees that family violence in all its forms is a violation of human rights but considers there is no need for new legislation in order to send a message that family violence is unacceptable.</p> <p>The Government considers that the current legislative framework, which includes the Domestic Violence Act 1995 and the Crimes Act 1961, is comprehensive. The Vulnerable Children Bill (currently before Parliament) allows the Government to set priorities for improving the wellbeing of vulnerable children, and this may also have an impact on family violence.</p> <p><i>The Government considers that no further action is required at this time although this could be considered again in the future.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 2:</i> The prevention of and response to family violence be a stated Government priority, with two Cabinet Ministers sharing responsibility and with one of those Ministers being the Minister of Finance</p>	<p>The Government considers that family violence is a stated priority but does not consider any change in Ministerial responsibility for family violence is required at this time.</p> <p>Responsibility for addressing family violence sits across a range of Ministerial portfolios. The Family Violence Ministerial Group (Ministerial Group) has oversight of work to address family violence at a Ministerial level.</p> <p>The Ministerial Group is currently chaired by the Associate Minister for Social Development, Hon Tariana Turia, and its membership includes the Ministers of Justice, Health, Education, Police, Housing, Women's Affairs, Māori Affairs, and Pacific Island Affairs, and the Ministers for Social Development, Ethnic Affairs, Whānau Ora, and Disability Issues.</p> <p>The Ministerial Group is designed to provide better alignment of legislation, policy and services that address family violence, and ensure that linkages with other strategic priorities are maintained.</p> <p><i>The Government considers that no further action is required at this time although this could be considered again in the future.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 3:</i> The new legislation requires Government departments to work together in an integrated way and working alongside the community, using a community development</p>	<p>The Government recognises that integrated government approaches are valuable ways of working with at-risk families but considers there is no need for new legislation.</p> <p>In 2012, the Government set 10 Better Public Service Key Result</p>

EAG recommendation	Government Response
<p>approach, to prevent family violence and protect those either at risk from family violence or affected by it. This includes ensuring Chief Executives are accountable for agreed outcomes. The new legislation should mandate those recommendations of the EAG which are adopted.</p>	<p>Areas for the public sector to achieve over the next five years. Three of these Better Public Service areas have a particular focus on family violence: reduce the number of assaults on children (number 4), reduce total crime rate (number 7) and reduce re-offending (number 8). Ministers and a public sector Chief Executive have been appointed to lead each result area and are accountable for demonstrating real progress against results.</p> <p>While Chief Executive accountability will not be included within legislation, the Social Sector Forum has agreed to add family violence as one of its priority areas. The Social Sector Forum provides a forum for joined-up accountability across responsible Chief Executives and cross-agency co-ordination. This provides cross-sector leadership without the need for new legislation.</p> <p>The Government also recognises that community-led approaches are one way of working with at-risk families. The Government currently supports 16 Social Sector Trials locations while the Children's Action Plan is about changing the way we work with children, families and whānau to protect our most vulnerable children.</p> <p>Refer also to Recommendations 16 and 21.</p> <p><i>This recommendation has already been partly addressed and the Government will continue to review to see what more can be done.</i></p>
<p>Rec 4: A Family Violence Oversight Committee be formed of all relevant Chief Executives (or officials with delegated authority) and that this Committee be required to ensure Government departments' work programmes align through annual plans and agreed objectives.</p>	<p>The Government considers that the Social Sector Forum provides a forum for joined-up accountability across responsible Chief Executives and cross-agency co-ordination.</p> <p>In December 2013, following a request from the Associate Minister for Social Development, the Hon Tariana Turia, The Social Sector Forum added family violence as one of its priority areas. The Social Sector Forum will provide strategic oversight of work to address family violence at a departmental level.</p> <p>Chaired by the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development, the Social Sector Forum consists of the Secretaries of Education and Justice, the Director-General of Health, and the Chief Executives of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Te Puni Kōkiri and Housing New Zealand Corporation. The Commissioner of Police attends the Social Sector Forum meetings.</p> <p>The Justice Sector Leadership Board, comprises the Commissioner of Police, Secretary for Justice and Chief Executive of Corrections, also has responsibility for driving performance and response to family violence across the justice system.</p> <p><i>This recommendation has already been partly addressed and the Government will continue to review to see what more can be done.</i></p>
<p>Rec 5: The new legislation recognises (and any existing legislation be amended to recognise) the differing needs of all victims and perpetrators (Pākehā, Māori, Pacific and other ethnicities or distinct communities such as the disabled, migrant or refugee populations, the elderly). The new legislation should also reflect New Zealand's obligations under the United Nations Conventions on the Right of the Child and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p>	<p>As New Zealand is party to a number of international agreements that protect and promote the rights of victims in New Zealand and around the world, the Government considers there is no need for new legislation.</p> <p>The Government has a range of initiatives underway to support the needs of different victims and offenders. <i>E Tu Whānau</i> and <i>Nga Vaka o Kāiā Tapu</i> have been developed to integrate cultural and clinical competence into the design and delivery of services to both victims and perpetrators. <i>E Tu Whānau</i> builds on the principles of Mauri Ora, a practice model that uses a Māori conceptual framework for transforming whānau violence, and <i>Nga Vaka o Kāiā Tapu</i> is a cultural framework for addressing family violence in Pacific communities.</p> <p><i>This recommendation has already been partly addressed and the Government will continue to review to see what more can be done.</i></p>

EAG recommendation	Government Response
<p>Rec 6: The prevention of family violence is a whole of Government responsibility, but that within that the Ministry of Education has a key role to play in primary prevention.</p>	<p>The Government recognises that multiple agencies share responsibility for the primary prevention of family violence.</p> <p>The Government recognises that a whole-of-government approach to addressing family violence is required. A key part of this approach will be primary prevention of family violence.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education is undertaking both general and targeted projects relating to wider family violence prevention. Both the early childhood curriculum (<i>Te Whāriki</i> – Belonging strand) and New Zealand Curriculum (key competencies Relating to Others and Participating and Contribution) include expectations that all learners develop, and teachers actively teach, positive relationship skills. An effective approach is the <i>Positive Behaviour for Learning</i> (PB4L) initiative, which provides programmes and actions for parents, teachers and schools to promote positive behaviour in children and young people.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education is also developing best practice guidelines to aid the selection, development, and implementation of school-based programmes, including those relating to relationships, sexuality education, alcohol and other drugs. These guidelines will support schools to develop their curriculum to ensure positive outcomes for young people and the reduction of harm.</p> <p><i>This recommendation has already been partly addressed and the Government will continue to review to see what more can be done.</i></p>
<p>Rec 7: The Privacy Act 1993 be amended to allow sharing of information in relation to family violence or the risk of family violence.</p>	<p>Following amendments in 2013 to the Privacy Act 1993, the Government considers that no legislative change is required.</p> <p>The Privacy Act 1993 (Principles 10 and 11) was amended in 2013 to allow personal information to be disclosed where there is a serious threat to safety. Previously, the threat had to be both serious and imminent – a much higher threshold.</p> <p>The Privacy Act 1993 also provides for Approved Information Sharing Agreements which are a mechanism allowing information sharing between and within agencies to deliver public services.</p> <p><i>The Government considers that no further action is required at this time although this could be considered again in the future.</i></p>
<p>Research and information management</p>	
<p>Rec 8: A Family Violence Research Hub be established to collate data, evaluate programmes and share information.</p>	<p>The Government recognises that research and evaluation is a critical component in the design and delivery of family violence services and is addressing this issue.</p> <p>The Government considers that the Families Commission, through the Social Policy and Research Unit (SuPERU), is the appropriate place to work towards achieving the intent of this recommendation. Work to develop a shared definition and understanding of family violence, and an agreed set of family violence indicators, is under consideration as part of a whole-of-government approach to addressing family violence.</p> <p>The New Zealand Police is currently in the process of introducing two new crime statistics – one on victims and the other on offenders. The new collections on victims and offenders will report on the period from 1 July 2014. Police and Statistics New Zealand intend to begin publication these new crime statistics from late August 2014.</p> <p>The Government also notes that the Ministry of Social Development has developed a single data analysis hub which will improve its ability to access richer data and analysis to inform policy design and operational decisions. This will, in the future, position the Ministry to be a centre of expertise for advanced</p>

EAG recommendation	Government Response
	<p>analytics supported by rich, linked data, which will contribute to realisation of the Government's ICT strategy, support integration of insight into policy and operational delivery, and contribute to innovation, evaluation and continuous improvement.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 9: The Government commission, as a matter of urgency, a 'map the gaps' stocktake to evaluate where service delivery gaps exist (both geographical and type of service). Part of the focus of this stocktake needs to look at the gaps in service for minority groups such as Māori, Pacific, the Disabled and the Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Transgender and Intersex (GLBTI) communities.</i></p>	<p>The Government recognises that there is a need for more clarity surrounding services and funding within the family violence sector.</p> <p>The Government has directed officials to undertake a stocktake of current initiatives and government spend in the area of family violence, including an analysis of the results to date and advice on what initiatives have proven (or not proven) to be effective.</p> <p>In addition, the Ministry of Social Development is developing <i>Investing in Services for Outcomes</i>, a framework that will guide funding decisions across the Ministry by identifying what services communities are currently receiving and what is needed, including the mix of preventative and intensive services.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 10: Government commission, as a companion to the 'map the gap' stocktake, a review of what family violence programmes or initiatives are already working well. Are there common characteristics? What can be replicated and what can't?</i></p>	<p>The Government recognises that there is a need for more clarity and information on service effectiveness within the family violence sector.</p> <p>As noted in response to Recommendation 9, the Government has directed officials to undertake a stocktake of current initiatives and government spend in the area of family violence, including an analysis of the results to date and advice on what initiatives have proven (or not proven) to be effective.</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Development's <i>Investing in Services for Outcomes</i> will also contribute by ensuring that, over time, investment in family violence services and programmes is effective, achieves results for people and communities, and contributes to the longer-term knowledge and understanding of 'what works', for whom, and when.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 11: All Government agencies and community providers use standardised risk assessment tools to categorise risk and dangerousness to ensure consistency and safety.</i></p>	<p>The Government recognises the importance of using standardised risk assessment tools.</p> <p>Work to develop a standardised risk assessment framework is under consideration as part of a whole-of-government approach to addressing family violence. This would align evidence-based risk assessment tools to ensure consistency in addressing family violence cases across government agencies and service providers.</p> <p><i>Work to address this recommendation will be included in the work programme to address family violence.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 12: All reports of the Family Violence Death Review Committee be published in an abridged form that protects the identity of the victims but focuses on systems and practices. Where are the gaps? What are the lessons?</i></p>	<p>The Government notes that the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2010 would need to be amended to allow for the release of abridged versions of confidential individual death review reports.</p> <p>The Family Violence Death Review Committee (the Committee) is an independent advisor to the Health Quality and Safety Commission. The maintenance of confidentiality is crucial to the functioning of the Committee and is required by the legislation.</p> <p>The Health Quality and Safety Commission will liaise with the Committee regarding the appropriateness of possible legislative</p>

EAG recommendation	Government Response
	<p>change. The purpose of publishing any abridged reports would be for the consideration of systems issues, and any reports would need to be published in a form that protects the identity of the victims and the families involved.</p> <p><i>Work to address this recommendation will be included in the work programme to address family violence.</i></p>
Streamlined service delivery, efficiency and partnerships	
<p><i>Rec 13:</i> Services should be available throughout the country across the response continuum from primary prevention, through to crisis services, to those supporting the rebuilding of lives. As a consequence of the stocktakes, recommended above, funding for the family violence sector should be allocated so that services across the whole country are adequately resourced and community providers are supported.</p>	<p>The Government notes that work is underway to develop ways for agencies to work more effectively with community providers.</p> <p>The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment’s Streamlined Contracting Framework is supporting improvements in government agency contracting with the NGO sector through the provision of new contract, contract management, and decision-making documents. This will improve co-ordination and information sharing and help to better integrate services.</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Development’s <i>Investing in Services for Outcomes</i> will also contribute by ensuring that, over time, investment in family violence services and programmes is effective, achieves results for people and communities, and contributes to the longer-term knowledge and understanding of ‘what works’, for whom, and when. Part of this involves developing a framework that will guide funding decisions by identifying what services are needed in communities, including the appropriate mix of preventative and intensive services.</p> <p>Refer also to Recommendation 10.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 14:</i> Primary prevention and core crisis response services need to be adequately and sustainably resourced with multi-year budgets. Funding should be tied to a family violence capability framework. Nationally consistent standards and processes are required.</p>	<p>The Government notes that work is underway to develop frameworks that guide funding decisions and address the issue of longer-term contracts.</p> <p>The Government notes that the Ministry of Social Development is developing <i>Investing in Services for Outcomes</i>, a framework that will guide funding decisions across the Ministry. Part of this work will include providing the tools and resources that support organisations funded by the Ministry to become stronger and more adaptable in the current environment.</p> <p><i>Investing in Services for Outcomes</i> will see the Ministry of Social Development providing the sector with more stability through long-term, outcomes-focused contracts and flexible funding approaches. Longer-term contracts will become increasingly common as a result of <i>Investing in Services for Outcomes</i> and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise’s Streamlined Contracting Framework.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 15:</i> Across all agencies and disciplines on-going training and up-skilling is required to ensure that family violence (in all its iterations) is detected and responded to effectively and safely. This is to include training in cultural competency. The EAG wants professionals and others working the sector to have the skills to competently ‘join the dots’ when presented with evidence of violence or abuse.</p>	<p>The Government recognises a skilled workforce is fundamental in order to detect and respond to family violence.</p> <p>Training to respond to family violence is currently provided within specific areas such as the Violence Intervention Programme and within the <i>E Tu Whānau</i> and <i>Pasefika Proud</i> programmes.</p> <p>The Government is considering workforce training as part of a whole-of-government approach to addressing family violence.</p> <p><i>Work to address this recommendation will be included in the work</i></p>

EAG recommendation	Government Response
	<i>programme to address family violence.</i>
<p><i>Rec 16:</i> One size does not fit all and communities are best suited to develop the initiatives that will work for their members/whānau/kāiga.</p>	<p>The Government recognises that supporting and enabling communities to tackle the issues and develop appropriate interventions to address family violence is critical.</p> <p>As noted in Recommendation 3, the Government recognises that community-led approaches are one way of further reducing family violence. Existing family violence initiatives (for instance <i>It's not OK, E Tu Whānau and Pasifika Proud</i>) are making a real impact in communities, and enabling Māori and Pacific communities to identify solutions and take ownership of the issue of violence.</p> <p>Other Government initiatives underway, such as the Social Sector Trials and Children's Teams, provide lessons that could be built upon to further mobilise the community to respond to family violence.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 17:</i> To assist integration and collaboration across agencies the position of National Family Violence Network Co-ordinator be established, with a supporting Secretariat, to oversee the integration of Government and community provision of primary prevention programmes and response services and the implementation of national codes of practice.</p>	<p>The Government acknowledges the contribution of the family violence prevention network co-ordinators but does not intend to appoint a National Family Violence Network Co-ordinator at this time.</p> <p>The Government currently provides time-limited funding, until 2014/15, for more than 30 local family violence networks, which work with over 1,000 local agencies, through the Family Violence Response Co-ordination fund.</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Development is currently reviewing whether services delivered through this initiative can be delivered through the Vulnerable Children work programme and/or through Investing in Services for Outcomes, and will report on this to the Minister of Finance and Minister for Social Development.</p> <p>Refer also to Recommendation 18.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 18:</i> The number of Regional Family Violence Network Co-ordinators with reach into the communities in which they live be increased and their role strengthened. The EAG recommends each region (yet to be defined) should have two Regional Family Violence Network Co-ordinators; one to co-ordinate primary prevention services and the second to co-ordinate response services. These co-ordinators need to be properly funded and properly paid.</p>	<p>The Government acknowledges the contribution of the family violence prevention network co-ordinators but does not intend to increase the number of co-ordinators at this time.</p> <p>As noted in Recommendation 17, the Government currently provides funding for more than 30 local family violence networks through the Family Violence Response Co-ordination fund.</p> <p>The Government recognises that there is scope to build the capacity and capability of these networks and co-ordinators to enable them to achieve more effective outcomes and integrate national programmes at local levels.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 19:</i> National standards and accreditation processes for family violence programmes be developed that ensure that programmes are run in accordance with international best practice.</p>	<p>The Government notes that work has begun on developing a process to approve providers.</p> <p>As part of the implementation of the Domestic Violence Amendment Act 2013, the Ministry of Justice is developing a process to approve providers. This will include developing a Code of Practice (drawing on experiences in the United Kingdom and Australia), which will be contractually binding on approved providers, and developing a quality assurance framework around audits – including clinical audits.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice is also collaborating closely with the Ministry of Social Development and the Department of Corrections to ensure consistency in the standards for all processes and</p>

EAG recommendation	Government Response
	<p>procedures across approved providers.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 20: An on-going commitment to national education/social marketing campaigns aimed at changing attitudes to family violence (in collaboration with community run projects).</i></p>	<p>The Government has an on-going commitment to national education/social marketing campaigns through its on-going commitment to the <i>It's not OK</i> campaign</p> <p>There is good evidence that programmes, such as the <i>It's not OK</i> campaign, are working well to raise awareness of family violence in the community, and provide a supportive environment for people to ask for and receive help. Primary prevention, which includes education and social marketing campaigns, will continue to be a key focus of activity to further reduce and prevent family violence.</p> <p><i>The Government notes that work is currently underway to address this recommendation.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 21: Closer coordination between the Ministries of Education, Health and Social Development to lead and/or support prevention initiatives.</i></p>	<p>The Government is addressing this through its Better Public Service result areas and through the Social Sector Forum.</p> <p>As noted in the response to Recommendation 3, the Government has set a number of result areas for the public sector to achieve. This will require government agencies to work together to achieve results.</p> <p>The Social Sector Forum also provides a forum for joined-up accountability across responsible Chief Executives and cross-agency co-ordination. Membership of the Social Sector Forum includes the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development (Chair), the Secretary of Education and the Director-General of Health. In December 2013, the Social Sector Forum added family violence as one of its priority areas. The Social Sector Forum will provide strategic oversight of work to address family violence at the departmental level.</p> <p><i>This recommendation has already been partly addressed and the Government will continue to review to see what more can be done.</i></p>
<p><i>Rec 22: A national multi-agency case management process be developed for high risk cases.</i></p>	<p>The Government recognises the importance of a multi-agency case management system and will give further consideration to enhancing the current system.</p> <p>A multi-agency system is already in place in New Zealand. The Family Violence Interagency Response System was established in 2006 to respond to incidents of family violence reported to Police where children were present.</p> <p>Work to enhance and expand the multi-agency case management system is under consideration as part of a whole-of-government approach to addressing family violence.</p> <p><i>Work to address this recommendation will be included in the work programme to address family violence.</i></p>