STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING LOCAL AND REGIONAL FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE NETWORKS

FINAL REPORT

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ABOUT THE NEW ZEALAND FAMILY VIOLENCE CLEARINGHOUSE

The New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (NZFVC) is the national centre for family violence and sexual violence research and information. The Clearinghouse was launched in 2005 in association with Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy. Te Rito was developed in 2002 as a plan of action to reduce and eliminate family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand.

NZFVC provides information and resources for people working towards the elimination of family and sexual violence. We work to identify the best available local and international evidence and strategies for violence prevention and response, and to synthesise and disseminate this information to people working in policy and practice. Auckland UniServices has been contracted to provide NZFVC since 2011.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report highlights the essential role of community-based family violence and sexual networks in implementing the vision of Te Aorerekura to eliminate violence and improve the wellbeing of all people in Aotearoa New Zealand. These networks bring together people who work at the local level to address family violence and sexual violence from both community and government. These local networks create the foundation from which communities, providers and people affected by violence can build relationships and connections, engage at a grassroots level with our national vision, and work together in ways that are right for their community and people to challenge the conditions that allow violence.

There are approximately 43 existing local family violence and sexual violence networks in Aotearoa. They build relationships, foster good practice and information sharing, offer training, support network members in their work, and lead community awareness and mobilisation activities addressing both family violence and sexual violence. The networks have a unique and essential role in holding space for coordination and collaboration that crosses crisis response, intervention and prevention.

Through the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) the government has provided funding for most of the local violence networks, helping to support the growth of community networks throughout the country. This funding has continued to be short-term and unstable, with significant variations across the networks.

This report repeats the findings of several previous reports and international research that overwhelmingly identifies lack of funding as one of the most significant barriers to effective community initiatives addressing both family violence and sexual violence.

The report also echoes the call of previous reports, researchers and advocates including those from the Expert Advisory Group on Family Violence, Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families and Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence, which have continued to recommend adequate long-term funding for both local and national networks, and national level coordination and infrastructure.

While existing local family violence networks are inclusive of tangata whenua, additional structures and spaces need to be strengthened and/or developed that are led by tangata whenua and that respond specifically to the needs and aspirations of tangata whenua.

The New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse was commissioned by Te Puna Aonui to understand who are the existing local and regional family violence and sexual violence networks, what is the current landscape of collaborative initiatives addressing violence in Aotearoa, and what would strengthen the existing local and regional networks.

The findings and recommendations in this report are based on a literature review, focus groups with and an online survey of local family violence and sexual violence networks, and interviews with key informants from local networks, national networks and government agencies.

Findings

1. **Family and sexual violence networks across Aotearoa are a critical mechanism for implementing Te Aorerekura. There is significant potential to strengthen existing networks to enhance their effectiveness and impact.**

   Shift 2 of Te Aorerekura, *Towards Mobilising Communities*, is described as:

   > *"… bringing together and strengthening relationships between tangata whenua, central and local government, the specialist sector, communities and businesses to plan the responses and actions needed to eliminate violence."*

   Established family violence and sexual violence networks are already providing a critical space for fostering connections between the groups described in the quote above. The barriers to participation in local networks are low and they are community-led, unlike other coordination forums such as Safety Assessment Meeting (SAM) tables which are focused on case management and often led by Police. Existing family violence networks and network coordinators are deeply embedded within the communities in which they are situated and hold significant institutional and community memory.

   When properly resourced, networks:

   - provide an important space for fostering connections between organisations and individuals working at the local level in areas that intersect with family violence and sexual violence and wider health and social services;
   - are deeply embedded within the communities in which they are situated and hold significant institutional and community memory at the local level;
   - build knowledge, expertise and capacity at the community level around family violence and sexual violence;
   - are key sites for coordinating the roll out of workforce development initiatives and tools;
   - create critical pathways for feedback loops and strategic insights connecting the local, regional and national levels of the system;
   mobilise community action and coordinate prevention activities.

2. **There is a lack of a cohesive plan in relation to family violence and sexual violence networks across government. This creates a continuous cycle of 'new' initiatives layered over and competing with existing initiatives, along with a loss of focus and investment for existing and effective initiatives.**

   There appears to be little to no coordination between the different central government agencies' attempts to deliver programmes of work at the regional and local level, with a constant layering of new initiatives and roles over the top of existing structures. Over the past 20 years, government has piloted and implemented several forms of locally-based government-led individual case management and coordination including Family Safety Teams (FST), Family Violence Interagency Response System (FVIARS), Family Harm Multi-Disciplinary Governance

Collectives (FHMDGCs), Integrated Safety Responses (ISR) and SAM (Safety Assessment Meeting) tables. More recently Place-based initiatives (PBIs) and Regional Public Service Commissioners have added to the complexity of collaborative initiatives implemented within communities.

The ability of local family violence and sexual violence networks – which are community-led and underfunded - to remain visible within this increasingly crowded and complex environment is extremely challenging. It was evident speaking with key informants, both working within government and outside of government, that there is very limited understanding on the part of government funders of the different purpose and functions of 'networks' as opposed to integrated case management.

It is also evident that there is an increasing focus on 'regions' as key sites for action. The focus on Regional Public Service Commissioners in Te Aorerekura, the proposed Regional Practice Leads and Place-based Initiatives (PBIs) are all examples of this increased focus. While building and strengthening systems at the regional level is important, these initiatives do not replace the need for local networks.

Finally, siloed funding and infrastructure continues to create challenges to cross sector collaboration. For example, the local networks funded by MSD are seen as 'family violence' networks, which invisibilises the inclusion of sexual violence services. While the funding focus has remained limited to family violence, communities and community networks have taken a broader and more inclusive approach undertaking collaborative work with both family violence and sexual violence providers and advocates on prevention projects that span both family violence and sexual violence.

3. **Funding for existing networks is extremely insecure. There is a serious risk that two decades of expertise and community initiatives will be lost.**

   This lack of a cohesive long-term plan for family violence and sexual violence networks has resulted in funding and resourcing that has been short-term and piecemeal. Furthermore, it is evident that the insecurity of funding has been a persistent issue over many years. Insecure and inadequate funding was one of the most significant challenges identified by survey respondents and focus groups.

   This short-term, last-minute approach to funding has had a number of obvious impacts that have inhibited the potential of existing networks. These impacts include challenges related to workforce development, planning and strategic development, and relationships within networks and communities.

   As of December 2023, there is currently:

   - No commitment on the part of the Ministry of Social Development to fund the existing Family Violence Response Coordination (the local family violence and sexual violence networks) beyond the end of June 2024.[1]

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   [1] The Ministry of Social Development's Family Violence Sexual Violence Update dated 17 May 2024,

- No confirmed commitment on the part of Te Puna Aonui to fund the population specific national networks established under Te Aorerekura beyond the end of 2024.
- A lack of clarity as to whether the proposed Regional Practice Lead roles that MSD consulted on in 2023 will now be implemented.

As such, there is significant urgency in understanding the value of local networks, what is required to support networks and how this in turn will support the implementation of Te Aorerekura moving forwards. If the current contracts supporting network coordination are ceased without any alternative structures put in place, there will be a significant loss of institutional knowledge and capacity at the local level. Rebuilding this network infrastructure from scratch is likely to take a long time and be costly when compared to looking at ways to strengthen and build on what already exists.

4. **Tangata whenua want to develop their own networks and spaces**

Under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) tangata whenua have the right to tino rangatiratanga – the right to self-determination and autonomy. While existing local family violence and sexual violence networks are inclusive of tangata whenua, additional structures and spaces need to be strengthened and/or developed that are led by tangata whenua and that respond specifically to the needs and aspirations of tangata whenua.

Tangata Whenua have been consistent in their messages about what is needed to create the conditions for transformation. Key reports have outlined how knowledge and practices that originate from within te ao Māori provide pathways for preventing and healing from violence, including family violence, sexual violence and historical trauma including colonisation and state violence. These reports include frameworks and in-depth discussion of concepts that can guide transformation from a state of violence to a state of hauora. They offer examples of important perspectives and reflections to inspire different ways of responding and preventing violence.

5. **Key informants, researchers and experts have been saying the same things for 20 years and yet recommendations aimed at strengthening networks have largely been ignored. This has been the biggest barrier to success.**

The findings and recommendations from this project are substantively congruent with previous reports and evaluations relevant to discussions on networks undertaken over many years. These have affirmed the importance of long-term funding, national coordination, and community leadership.

Recommendations

Overarchingly, there is a need for government to recognise and strengthen existing networks rather than continuing a cycle of layering new initiatives across the top of what is working well for local communities. Below we make recommendations as to how government can interrupt this cycle and increase the impact of local family violence and sexual violence networks.

Develop a cohesive plan across all government agencies for family violence and sexual violence networks

1. A clear and cohesive long-term plan should be developed that articulates the role and value of local violence prevention networks that aligns with Te Aorerekura Shift Two: Towards Mobilising Communities. This plan should:
    a. include a clear articulation of the purpose of networks and the high-level outcomes that are sought but also be flexible enough to be adapted to the particular contexts of individual networks and localities.
    b. map how local networks and coordinators connect to other parts of the system including Regional Practice Leads, national networks, Regional Public Service Commissioning structures and central government.
    c. acknowledge that the membership and focus of local networks is broader than just 'family violence' and is inclusive of sexual violence as well as healing and wellbeing.
    d. provide a clear mandate for and expectation that local networks and network coordinators contribute to strategy and policy development and are seen as key stakeholders in the implementation of Te Aorerekura.

Secure long-term funding for network coordination and community mobilisation activities

2. Secure long-term funding is needed to support networks at all levels of the system. This includes networks operating at the local, regional and national levels.
3. This funding should be implemented in line with the Social Sector Commissioning Principles. These principles speak to the importance of ensuring that funding models take account of:
    a. the full range of costs in delivering services. The level of funding for individual networks should support a dedicated coordinator role as well as funding to support the delivery of community initiatives and evaluation.
    b. ensuring that funding is longer-term. "In general, funding timeframes should align with a commitment to sustainability of support, flexibility to respond to contextual change and providing greater certainty for planning purposes." [2]

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[2] Ministry of Social Development, Social Sector Commissioning 2022-2028 Action Plan (Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, 2022).

4. Given that networks are reflective of Te Puna Aonui in terms of diversity across sectors and Ministries, funding for networks should be centralised and administered by Te Puna Aonui, rather than sitting within individual Ministries.

5. Funding should be available for tangata whenua and diverse communities to coordinate and mobilise that is additional to and not in competition with broader local network and community initiatives.

Backbone infrastructure to support networks

6. Backbone infrastructure is needed to support individual coordinators, reduce isolation, assist in feedback loops, increase consistency across networks and provide guidance and support for best practice. Specifically, a national coordinator role should be established with responsibility for assisting with coordination across networks. This would also help to raise visibility of local networks to key stakeholders at regional and national levels.

7. This role should sit outside of government and hold budget sufficient to provide opportunities for local and regional coordinators to connect on a regular basis.

Understanding obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and enacting partnership with Māori

8. Māori individuals and organisations participate in current network structures, and it is imperative that existing networks are responsive to and inclusive of the needs of tangata whenua. Commissioning for network contracts should, at minimum, ensure that a demonstrated understanding of and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a key prerequisite for funding being allocated.

9. Tangata whenua will also create and participate in structures that are Māori-led/tikanga-led and which are aimed at connecting tangata whenua working in family violence, sexual violence and healing and wellbeing being contexts. They hold the authority to define the purpose of these structures. Funding should be allocated to support tangata whenua to develop these structures irrespective of their participation within other networks.

INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse was commissioned by Te Puna Aonui to complete a stocktake of local and regional family violence and sexual violence networks and to make recommendations that would strengthen these networks going forward.

The stocktake is intended to support Te Puna Aonui's work to strengthen and expand local and regional networks to provide communities with opportunities to share and plan together ways to implement and monitor Te Aorerekura regionally.

This work was identified as a priority by the Systems Working Group as part of Te Aorerekura Action 5: Engage and value communities in collective monitoring, sharing and learning[3].

As such, the work is part of building understanding across government and the family violence and sexual violence sectors about working together on the implementation and monitoring of Te Aorerekura at local and regional levels.

This focus was prompted from a discussion at a Systems Working Group (SWG) meeting which identified:

> "…that strengthening and building existing networks was needed to support the sectors participation in the implementation and monitoring of Te Aorerekura, rather than building new infrastructures. Both the family violence and sexual violence sectors felt there was a gap in understanding the specific needs within the regions and how best to support the work regional networks and organisations have been doing to mobilise their community."[4]

For this work, we gathered information through a literature review, focus groups with and an online survey of local family violence and sexual violence networks, and interviews with key informants.

This report outlines the findings from the literature review and network member perspectives and makes recommendations related to local and regional network success and value, gaps and challenges, and opportunities and resources needed to strengthen and expand networks to enable them to be more inclusive and effectively implement Te Aorerekura.

For this project, we defined a network as:

> Networks are a coordinated group (either formal or informal) of individuals and organisations with a shared focus on addressing family violence and sexual violence. Examples include family violence networks funded by the Ministry of Social Development (previously known as Te Rito networks) and other networks working to address violence in their communities.

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[3] New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Te Aorerekura | The enduring spirit of affection: the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence* (Wellington: New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government, 2021).

[4] *Stocktake of regional FVSV networks Contract for Services* (Contract number 19044: Te Puna Aonui and UniServices, 2023).

Inherent in this definition is that the group of individuals and organisations are located in the same geographical area, which may be local or community based, regional or national.

This definition excludes integrated or coordinated case management systems, which were considered out of scope. These case management systems focus on coordinating responses to a single individual or family who is experiencing violence. They do not seek to engage with or mobilise the community.

There are approximately 43 local family violence and sexual violence networks throughout the country (See Appendix A). Most of these are currently funded by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). While some networks receive other funding, the vast majority of networks rely on MSD funding to support baseline coordination activities. Many of these networks are organised by an employed network coordinator and hosted at a local community agency. While referred to as family violence networks, this is historic in nature and most networks also involve organisations and representatives from the sexual violence sector. While the networks vary from one community to the next, in part due to variations in funding, collectively the local networks facilitate and build relationships, foster good practice and information sharing, support network members in their work and lead community awareness and mobilisation activities addressing both family violence and sexual violence. This work often spans both prevention, intervention and crisis response, again varying by resourcing, capacity and community need.

There are also national networks focused on violence as well as many other local and regional collaborative initiatives focused on violence. This report includes a snapshot of current local and regional family violence and sexual violence networks, as well as a broad overview of the wider landscape of collaborative initiatives.

Terminology

In Aotearoa, local community-based networks that address violence may be known by many names. These networks often have a name unique to their community (see Appendix A). Historically they were often described as family violence networks or Te Rito networks – referring to the original government Te Rito fund, based on the Te Rito National strategy for family violence, which initiated government funding for local networks. Over time, this terminology has changed. Mostly recently local networks have been referred to as Family Violence Response Coordination or Family Violence Response Coordinators (noting that while the same title, this is not the same role as the MSD employees whose title is Family Violence Response Coordinator). For this report, we use the term either local violence network or local family violence and sexual violence network to refer to the existing community-based networks that address family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa.

METHODS

The stocktake included a literature review, an online survey, focus groups and key informant interviews.

We defined a network as a coordinated group (either formal or informal) of individuals and organisations with a shared focus on addressing family violence and sexual violence. Examples include family violence networks funded by the Ministry of Social Development (previously known as Te Rito networks) and other networks working to address violence in their communities.

Networks have been previously identified by the local violence network coordinators themselves, who maintain a list that is hosted on the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse website (see Appendix A for this list). In addition, we informed participants at an SWG meeting of the project and invited attendees to either notify us of additional local and regional violence networks or share our contact details with local and regional violence networks who might be interested in participating. We invited key informants to tell us about networks they were aware of. We also searched MSD's Family Services Directory. No additional networks were identified beyond those already previously identified.

As the focus of the stocktake was exploring the strengthening and expansion of networks in the regions, the online surveys and focus groups focused on the 43 local and regional family violence networks. There are other collaborative initiatives at local, regional and national levels that address family violence and sexual violence that have developed independently and unique to the specific purpose of the network. To capture the unique learnings for such groups, representatives from national networks and other local and regional collaborative initiatives were included in key informant interviews, along with representatives of key government agencies.

Literature review

The literature review focused primarily on key Aotearoa New Zealand reports and articles focused on family violence and sexual violence networks, community mobilisation, community-led initiatives and violence prevention including Tikanga-led and whānau-led. International research was canvassed to provide supplementary information about community-led initiatives to address family violence and sexual violence. The evidence highlights benefits, key elements of effective initiatives, and recommendations to address barriers for community networks to address family violence and sexual violence.

Online survey

We surveyed local and regional family violence and sexual violence networks in Aotearoa New Zealand in July-August 2023. 43 networks were invited to complete the survey and there were 27 responses to the survey.

People who coordinate or organise regional family violence and sexual violence networks were

invited by email to complete the survey online using Qualtrics. If a network did not have a coordinator, a network member could answer the questions on behalf of the network. For networks with more than one coordinator, the survey was designed to be completed by one coordinator. Help or alternative ways to complete the survey were offered. The survey was anonymous and confidential. Networks received several reminders to complete the survey.

The survey asked questions about:

- Coordination: how the network is coordinated, the coordinator role, challenges and support/resource needs for the coordinator
- The Network: activities, strategy and planning, funding, and membership including involvement of key community groups
- Host agency: type, involvement and characteristics of successful host agencies
- Strengthening and expanding networks: successes, challenges, additional impact opportunities, sustainability and involvement with wider regional initiatives.

The survey included 44 questions. However, most questions were optional and not all questions were relevant for every network. Therefore some participants skipped or did not complete some questions.

An initial draft survey was circulated for feedback and review to a sample of family violence and sexual violence local and regional network coordinators, Te Puna Aonui, the Safe Strong Families & Communities team at the Ministry of Social Development, and researchers with expertise in violence.

Focus groups

Focus groups were held online via zoom with coordinators of local and regional family violence and sexual violence networks in September and October 2023. All networks received an invitation by email for either the network coordinator or a network representative to participate in the focus groups.

A total of 16 people participated in 3 focus groups. Participants came from a range of communities across both the North and South Islands, rural and urban, and also represented a range of individuals including gender diversity, ethnic and racial diversity including tangata whenua, and range of time in the coordinator role.

The sessions started with whakawhanaungatanga and six planned questions. The sessions were 90 minutes and involved mostly semi-structured discussion with brief periods for participants to individually quietly reflect and brainstorm. Facilitation of the sessions allowed the dialogue and participant experience and knowledge to guide and influence the discussion.

Questions focused on:

- Benefits of, need for and impact of networks
- challenges for networks and coordinators

- what works well to support local and regional coordination
- opportunities for improvement.

Live notes were taken on a shared screen so participants could see and if needed, correct the notes to ensure their feedback was accurately represented. After the session was completed, the notes were circulated to participants for review.

Participants were provided with koha to acknowledge their time and expertise.

Key informant interviews

A combination of individual and group interviews and meetings were held with 15 key informants across the project from May through November 2023. Key informants included representatives of key government agencies and individuals involved with regional and national family violence and sexual violence networks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A small number of studies and reports have looked specifically at the community-based violence networks in Aotearoa. They have provided in-depth reviews and consistent recommendations and findings over time.

There is a larger evidence base for broader community-led initiatives and prevention initiatives addressing family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa. Over the last two decades a range of Aotearoa reports have examined the prevention of family violence and sexual violence with a focus on community-led initiatives, including reports focused on Māori evidence and mātauranga. Many individual case studies, programme evaluations and reports have documented the benefits and key elements for the success of community-led prevention initiatives. A number of reports have also reviewed and summarised this evidence (along with international research) for community-led initiatives to prevent family violence and sexual violence, including the local violence networks in Aotearoa. The knowledge base is well-documented. The key findings have remained consistent and are summarised below. Internationally, there is also a substantial evidence base for community-led initiatives addressing gender-based violence (GBV) which reflects similar findings.

In this evidence base the terminology referring to community-led initiatives addressing GBV varies widely. The term 'violence network,' particularly at a local or community-based level, appears unique to Aotearoa with the exception of Victoria, Australia. Therefore, this literature review is inclusive of literature about local and regional violence networks in Aotearoa, and literature from Aotearoa and internationally on community-led initiatives to address GBV, including both family violence and sexual violence. This does not include literature about coordinated case management responses to individuals experiencing violence.

This knowledge base includes community initiatives by and for Māori. However, while these initiatives have increasingly been documented[5, 6, 7], evaluated and reviewed, broad scale reviews of both family violence and sexual violence have often missed the depth and extent of mātauranga Māori[8] and Māori community initiatives. Community initiatives by and for Pacific, migrant and ethnic communities, Rainbow communities, and disabled communities also appear to be less discussed in reviews. This may reflect a lack of awareness and exclusion of such communities in broad reviews, which have often used narrow language and concepts of community initiatives.

This may also highlight that such initiatives are less likely to be documented. For example, one

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[5] Angie Tangaere and Penny Hagen, "Tikanga-led design: Whānau-led innovation for system transformation," in *Entanglements of Designing Social Innovation in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Yoko Akama, and Joyce Yee (New York: Routledge, 2023).

[6] Di Grennell, and Fiona Cram, "Evaluation of Amokura: an Indigenous family violence prevention strategy," *MAI Review*, no. 2 (2008).

[7] Kim McBreen, *What are we learning from Te Kawa o te Ako about eliminating violence?* (Ōtaki: Te Wānanga o Raukawa, 2022).

[8] Leonie Pihama et al., "Māori Cultural Definitions of Sexual Violence," *Sexual Abuse in Australia and New Zealand: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 7, no. 1 (2016).

international review of community-led prevention initiatives for violence against immigrant and refugee women found the evidence is "extremely limited", noting that these grassroots initiatives and community-based prevention programmes are rarely documented in written formats[9]. Further, reviews of primary prevention of violence against women with disability have highlighted that most research and initiatives in this area have focused on addressing change at the individual level[10, 11, 12]. However, there are reports that document the benefits and elements of success for disability[13, 14] and ethnic community initiatives[15, 16].

Given the extensive knowledge base we did not endeavour to repeat the previous reviews. Instead, we highlight key findings from this knowledge base useful for understanding the following aspects of community-led initiatives relevant to community-based family violence and sexual violence networks:

1. what are community-led initiatives,
2. benefits and impacts of community-led initiatives,
3. barriers to success, and
4. key elements for effective community-led initiatives.

As noted previously, literature related to ISR, FVIARS and coordinated case management was considered out of scope, as integrated coordinated case management represents a different strategy for addressing violence, which focuses on government agency led responses to individual cases of violence, rather than a community-wide community-led response.

Community-led or community-based approaches and their application to violence prevention

Communities are essential to addressing violence, as the place where people learn and shape their beliefs, values and practices. It is also the place most people seek help. Building strong communities

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[9] Cathy Vaughan et al., *Promoting community-led responses to violence against immigrant and refugee women in metropolitan and regional Australia: The ASPIRE Project: State of knowledge paper* (Sydney: Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, 2015), page 2.

[10] David Moore et al., *Sexual violence prevention initiatives for disabled people in New Zealand: Literature review, stocktake and assessment* (Auckland: Sapere, 2020).

[11] Georgina Sutherland et al., *Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women with Disability: Evidence synthesis* (Melbourne: the University of Melbourne, 2021).

[12] Georgina Sutherland et al., 'No More Excuses' - Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women with Disability (Melbourne: the University of Melbourne, 2021).

[13] Moore, *Sexual violence prevention initiatives for disabled people*.

[14] Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families, *Evidence brief: issues and opportunities for addressing family violence within the disability sector* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2012).

[15] Versus Research, *Evaluation of the sexual violence prevention program* (Waikato: Versus Research for Shama Ethnic Women's Trust, 2023).

[16] Levine, Marlene and Nicole Benkert. *Case studies of community initiatives addressing family violence in refugee and migrant communities: final report* (Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2011).

with care and connection helps stop the cycle of violence and strengthens service providers' and the community's ability to respond to violence in effective, safe and helpful ways[17, 18].

Modern definitions and concepts of community mobilising largely originated in the US in the 1960s and 1970s with a significant focus on the US in response to inequities, particularly poverty and racism.

Internationally, a wide range of terms are often used to refer to work organised and implemented at the community level including community development, community mobilisation, community-led initiatives and community coordination[19]. Any or all of these terms could be used to describe the work of family violence and sexual violence networks in Aotearoa.

It is also important to note that knowledge and practices from te ao Māori (and other Indigenous cultures) predate the language and theories of community-mobilisation and community networks. Indigenous frameworks for wellbeing and healing (e.g. tikanga-led, whānau-led, tikanga-Māori, Pacific models) offer significant valuable knowledge systems and ways of doing things differently. These approaches can offer pathways to challenge dominant individual-based prevention systems and shift change, potentially faster, towards wellbeing for communities.

A key aspect of community-led approaches is that the work is led by community and focuses on social change, usually on complex problems with a purpose of improving life by and for the community. This approach is not individualistic, but rather, focuses on community-ownership of collective wellbeing. This social change is created and driven by community dialogue where community leads the discussion to identify the issues and develop solutions[20, 21, 22, 23]. This is often referred to as transformative change because the intention is to drive significant shifts.

Transformative change involves creating a culture where violence does not thrive[24,25] – this involves changing social norms (beliefs and attitudes), behaviours and practice, creating new ways of being, and building care and connection[26].

Social change requires more than shifting behaviours and attitudes, power and control must also shift. Researchers from SASA!, internationally one of the most documented effective community-led

[17] Kim McBreen, "Ngā Mahi Rarohenga: Organising Well Means Organising to End Violence," *Counterfutures* 12, (2021).

[18] McBreen, *Te Kawa o te Ako.*

[19] Cristy Trewartha, "Measuring community mobilisation" (PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2020).

[20] Trewartha, "Measuring community mobilisation".

[21] McBreen, "Ngā Mahi Rarohenga."

[22] Hattie Lowe et al., "Mechanisms for community prevention of violence against women in low- and middle-income countries: A realist approach to a comparative analysis of qualitative data," *Social Science & Medicine* 305, (2022).

[23] Harry Blagg, Nicole Bluett-Boyd, and Emma Williams, *Innovative models in addressing violence against Indigenous women: State of knowledge paper* (Issue 8, Sydney: Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, 2015).

[24] McBreen, "Ngā Mahi Rarohenga."

[25] Lowe et al., "Mechanisms for community prevention."

[26] McBreen, *Te Kawa o te Ako.*

initiatives to address gender-based violence, highlight that at the heart of community mobilisation is an "…aim to transform imbalances of power by sparking community-wide critical discussion and positive action" led by people in the community with support[27]. Such work is inherently complex and will involve multiple stakeholders. Change is also required at multiple levels and multiple areas within a community[28], which requires a multifaceted approach with engagement at all levels of change. Hann and Trewartha highlight that "This means that CM [community mobilisation] is time-intensive, process oriented, and complex due to the numbers of individuals, groups and organisations involved." [29]

Key to achieving this change is the involvement and development of community leaders. This involves recognising, supporting and fostering existing leadership within communities, while also creating opportunities for new community leaders to develop.[30, 31, 32, 33, 34] This approach shifts decision-making and action from external organisations to communities.

Government strategy in Aotearoa has long acknowledged the fundamental role of community in addressing violence. In 2002, Te Rito Action Area 14 supported the start of formal funding for local and regional community networks to respond to violence in their community[35]. The aims of this initial funding specification were "…to strengthen communities' abilities to effectively prevent and respond to family violence by:

- Enhancing community capacity to work collaboratively
- Increasing community ownership of and responsiveness to family violence prevention
- Enhancing service coordination and the ability of services to work in complementary way.[36]"

The first report of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families in 2006 highlighted that eliminating family violence requires "…co-ordinated, multi-level action over a number of years."[37]

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[27] Lori Michau and Sophie Namy, "*SASA! Together*: An evolution of the SASA! Approach to prevent violence against women," *Evaluation and Program Planning* 86, page 2 (June 2021).

[28] Terry Dobbs, and Moana Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework: The basis for whānau violence prevention and intervention* (Issues paper 6, Auckland: New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2014).

[29] Sheryl Hann, and Cristy Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand communities to prevent family violence* (Issues paper 8, Auckland: New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2015), page 14.

[30] Mohan Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention of family violence and sexual violence* (Palmerston North: Centre for Culture-centered Approach to Research and Evaluation (CARE), Massey University, 2021).

[31] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women*.

[32] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand*.

[33] Tangaere and Hagen, "Tikanga-led design."

[34] Trewartha, "Measuring community mobilisation."

[35] Family and Community Services. *Review of the Te Rito Phase II Collaborative Community Family Violence Prevention Fund* (Wellington: Family and Community Services, 2009).

[36] Child Youth and Family, *Te Rito Phase II - Collaborative Community Family Violence Prevention Services Evaluation Scoping Report* (Prepared by Karen Jones: Unpublished 2004), quoted in Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II Collaborative Community Family Violence Prevention Fund* (Wellington: Family and Community Services, 2009), page 4.

[37] Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, *The First Report* (Wellington: Ministry of Social

One of the 4 guiding principles for the Taskforce was community-driven leadership noting this means "...leadership at all levels of a community". [38]

The 2009 Te Toiora Mata Tauherenga: report of the Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence[39] highlighted a need for coordination among services and government at both a local and national level. The report also includes perspectives from TOAH-NNEST (Te Ohaakii a Hine – National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together) on long-term recovery which included the need for a funding model that supports coordination and networking between services.

In the national strategy, Te Aorerekura launched in 2021 Shift Two focusses on mobilising communities through which "Te Aorerekura aims to build collective ownership for solutions, and support and resource integrated, community-led responses" [40].

The 2019-2023 Ministry of Social Development shared framework for the primary prevention of family and sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand recognises community mobilisation and community development as evidence-based strategies[41]. This framework was developed by MSD and ACC to inform the prevention component of the national family violence and sexual violence strategy.

The definitions and core elements of these reports and strategies emphasise community ownership and collective response, not top-down solutions that focus on individuals. Despite this, Aotearoa and international research has identified an increasing trend to focus violence prevention and community development on individual behaviours and individual service provision[42, 43, 44, 45, 46]. With this approach "Culture and community are treated as pathologies to be fixed by imposing Eurocentric prevention approaches. Simultaneously, cultural contexts, community capacity for change, and individual and Whānau agency are erased." [47] Yet, Te Aorerekura and the literature clearly indicates that healing must happen at both individual and community levels in order to interrupt the intergenerational cycle of violence, and situates communities as the core place of preventing violence, facilitating healing and fostering wellbeing.

Development, 2006).

[38] Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, *The Ongoing Programme of Action* (Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, 2007), page 9.

[39] Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence, *Te Toiora Mata Tauherenga*.

[40] New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Te Aorerekura*, page 38.

[41] Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, *Campaign for Action on Family Violence: Framework for Change 2019-2023* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2021).

[42] Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention*.

[43] Trewartha, "Measuring community mobilisation."

[44] Leonie Pihama, Naomi Simmonds, and Waikaremoana Waitoki, *Te Taonga o Taku Ngākau: Ancestral Knowledge and the Wellbeing of Tamariki Māori* (Hamilton: Te Kotahi Research Institute, 2019).

[45] Tāmati Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence - A Conceptual Framework: An updated version of the report from the former Second Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence* (2nd editions, Wellington: Te Puni Kokiri, 2004).

[46] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*

[47] Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention,* page 6.

Te ao Māori has much in common with these principles and goals. Te ao Māori has always embraced a collective, connected, and empowered community as essential to wellbeing[48, 49]. Community and whānau have always been central to wellbeing, and a place for intervention and healing[50, 51, 52].

Based on this foundation, Māori traditions, knowledge and practice provide pathways for interventions and prevention for violence for both tangata whenua and tauiwi[53, 54, 55, 56, 57]. This includes tikanga Māori, tikanga-led and whānau-led frameworks for work with communities, whānau and people living with violence[58, 59, 60, 61, 62]. These reports and research outline how practices and knowledge from te ao Māori are community-led, collective and holistic pathways of transformative change to address healing from intergenerational trauma and colonisation. These frameworks present "…a move away from individualised approaches that focus on the deficits within communities and brings positive change by drawing upon our collective strengths within whānau, hapū, iwi and community".[63] Research and reports highlight that Pacific models[64, 65] and other international Indigenous community-led initiatives[66] also prioritise a community-led and holistic approach that is inclusive of community wellbeing and building on strengths.

A summary of consultation undertaken as part of the development of Te Aorerekura[67] identified that tangata whenua:

- Expect a national strategy anchored in te ao Māori, with whānau Māori at its centre, that recognises the impacts (historic and contemporary) of colonisation, racism and discrimination on the ability of Māori to thrive.

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[48] Pihama, Simmonds, and Waitoki, *Te Taonga o Taku Ngākau*.

[49] Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence*.

[50] Leonie Pihama, Kuni Jenkins, and Alamein Middleton, *Te Rito action area 13 literature review: family violence prevention for Māori Research Report* (Wellington: Manatū Hauora | Ministry of Health, 2003).

[51] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*

[52] Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence*.

[53] Pihama, Jenkins, and Middleton, *Family violence prevention for Māori.*

[54] Leonie Pihama and Huriana McRoberts, *Te Puāwaitanga o te Kākano: a background paper report* (Te Puni Kokiri, n.d.).

[55] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*

[56] Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence.*

[57] Leonie Pihama et al., *He Waka Eke Noa: Māori Cultural Frameworks for Violence Prevention and Intervention* (Taranaki: Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki, 2023).

[58] Pihama and McRoberts, *Te Puāwaitanga o te Kākano.*

[59] Pihama, Jenkins, and Middleton, *Family violence prevention for Māori.*

[60] Tangaere and Hagen, "Tikanga-led design."

[61] Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence.*

[62] Leonie Pihama et al., *He Waka Eke Noa.*

[63] Pihama, Simmonds, and Waitoki, *Te Taonga o Taku Ngākau, page 48*.

[64] Yvonne Crichton-Hill and Julia Ioane, *Pasifika protective factors for family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2023).

[65] Teuila Percival et al., *Pacific pathways to the prevention of sexual violence: Full report* (Auckland: Pacific Health, School of Population Health, University of Auckland, 2010).

[66] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women.*

[67] Joint Venture: Eliminating Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Analysis: Tangata* whenua (Wellington: Joint Venture: Eliminating Family Violence and Sexual Violence, 2022).

- Want government to acknowledge that the existing funding and contracting models, as well as the provision of resources and services for whānau Māori, are completely inadequate and that work needs to begin immediately to remedy this issue.
- Expect government to demonstrate its commitment to true Te Tiriti partnership by evolving decision-making and governance responsibilities to whānau, hapū and iwi.

As part of Shift Two ('*Towards mobilising communities'*) of Te Aorerekura, Action 8 outlined the need to establish a Ministerial Tangata Whenua Advisory Group. In November 2021, Cabinet approved the establishment of Te Pūkotahitanga to give effect to the Māori-Crown partnership. Subsequent to the implementation of Te Pūkotahitanga, He Roopuu Manaaki was established to support Te Puna Aonui to achieve Action 5 of Te Aorerekura, *'Engage and value communities in collective monitoring, sharing and learning'* in relation to engagement with tangata whenua. Their role in supporting kaimahi Māori working in family violence and sexual violence sectors to come together is described in more detail in the overview of collaborative initiatives in this report.

Benefits and impacts of community-led initiatives

Effectiveness in reducing rates of violence

When looking at the evidence to support community-led initiatives, literature reviews and researchers have often focused on whether there has been a reduction in rates of violence. However, changes in violence prevalence take time to achieve, and may be more likely to be detected over longer periods of time, such as five to 10 years. Further, many community programmes focus on raising understanding and awareness of violence, as well as options for help and providing better access to help. As a result, effective community-based programmes are likely to lead to increased help seeking and reporting, which could be misconstrued or perceived as an increase in rates of violence.

Until recently, globally there was limited 'rigorous' research assessing the impact of community-based programmes designed to reduce gender-based violence including family violence and sexual violence. However, in a recent 2023 systematic review and meta-analysis the authors claim to provide the first causal evidence that gender-transformative community-based and group-based prevention programmes targeting intimate partner violence led to a significant reduction in past-year IPV against women[68]. The review only included randomised-controlled trials, considered the most rigorous form of research, noting that the number of these had rapidly increased in recent years. Prior to this, the SASA! programme was the most well-known, extensively and rigorously researched community mobilisation programme. The programme has been shown to reduce women's risk of IPV up to 50%, resulting in an uptake of the programme in over 25 countries over the last decade[69]. The SASA! programme has recently been revised and updated. However, the programme researchers note that it is not possible for one programme to meet the needs of all

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[68] Jessica Leight et al., "Effectiveness of community mobilisation and group-based interventions for preventing intimate partner violence against women in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis," *Journal of Global Health* 13, no. 04115 (October 2023).
[69] Michau and Namy, "*SASA! Together*: An Evolution."

communities – one size does not fit all. Most of this research has been focused on low to middle income countries.

An earlier, 2014, broader global review identified 21 studies and six rigorous evaluations that had reported significantly positive results in reducing any form of violence against women and girls[70]. In this review, studies examining high income countries were overrepresented, and it included both prevention and response programmes. It included both community-based and individual response programmes.

Such research has not been carried out in Aotearoa.

Changing attitudes, beliefs and behaviours

There is limited evidence in the literature of the impact on attitudes and behaviours for community-based violence prevention initiatives in Aotearoa. The evidence is often captured in individual case studies or programme evaluations (for example the Bring in The Bystander programme[71] and Shama's Sexual Violence Prevention Programme[72]). However, some reviews have considered the benefits of community initiatives including impact on attitudes and behaviours.

The 2009 review of the Te Rito fund for local family violence networks[73] outlined the activities and ways that the networks contribute to attitudinal changes and their success in carrying out work targeting attitudes and behaviours in relation to violence prevention. A 2015 report[74] used in-depth case studies of seven communities in Aotearoa to document self-reported attitude and behaviour changes related to violence awareness and prevention and other positive impacts from local family violence networks and family violence prevention initiatives that were part of the national 'It's Not Ok' campaign.

A 2013 stocktake[75] of sexual violence primary prevention community programmes in Aotearoa, noted at the time that there was limited publicly available evaluation of existing sexual violence prevention activities. The stocktake identified other impacts and benefits discussed below.

Evaluations of national initiatives and campaigns that engage community at the local level in Aotearoa to address family violence have reported increased awareness and changed attitudes and behaviours in relation to violence. This includes the E Tu Whānau social change movement and

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[70] Mary Ellsberg, et al., "Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say?" The Lancet 305, no. 9977 (2015).

[71] Zoran Stojanov, et al., "Pro-social bystander sexual violence prevention workshops for first year university students: perspectives of students and staff of residential colleges," Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online 16, no. 2 (2021).

[72] Versus Research, *Evaluation of the sexual violence prevention program,* (Waikato: Versus Research for Shama Ethnic Women's Trust, 2023).

[73] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II.*

[74] Michael Roguski, *'It's Not Ok' Campaign Community Evaluation Project* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2015).

[75] Sandra Dickson, *Preventing sexual violence: a stocktake of Tauiwi & bicultural primary prevention activities 2013* (Wellington: Te Ohaakii a Hine – National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAHNNEST), 2013).

community initiatives[76], and the Pasefika Proud social change movement[77] including faith-based[78] and provider-based initiatives[79].

International research has also shown that community-based programmes can improve awareness and change attitudes and behaviours[80, 81, 82].

Broader changes and positive impacts

The 2009 review of the Te Rito fund for local family violence networks[83] outlines further benefits of the family violence networks, identified in the 2006 and 2009 evaluations. It notes that funding the networks supports a range of community-based collaborative work across primary prevention, early intervention and crisis intervention. The review lists 33 outcomes from the networks in the areas of strengthening community leadership, improving effectiveness of services, improving safety and accountability, changing attitudes and behaviours, and sustaining collaborations. Despite these valuable outcomes and impacts, the report also found that funding the networks "…has allowed for great progress in local joined-up responses to family violence but has been largely invisible at the national level."[84]

The 2013 stocktake[85] of sexual violence primary prevention community initiatives identified positive impacts and successes that included preventing revictimisation, building collaboration and community relationships, introducing interventions in schools and collaborating on shared resources. Notably, sexual violence networks and domestic violence agencies/networks were more likely to identify they worked as collaborative partners with others to meet regularly, work together and implement joint initiatives.

Case studies and evaluations of individual community-led initiatives provide greater depth and understanding of the positive impacts and benefits. The evaluation of Amokura, an Iwi-led whole-of-community initiative to address family violence, found the initiative improved relationships and networks, increased awareness among the community and providers, increased skills of local practitioners, and facilitated the adoption of 'zero tolerance to violence' polices among iwi

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[76] E Tū Whānau, *E Tū Whānau Mahere Rautaki: Framework for Change 2019-2023* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2020).

[77] Malatest International, *Final Report: Evaluation of the Pasefika Proud Campaign* (Wellington: Malatest International, 2015).

[78] Alefaio-Tugia, Siautu and Sesimani Havea. *Formative Evaluation of Pacific Faith-Based Family Violence Services,* (Wellington: Pasefika Proud, 2016).

[79] Integrity Professionals Limited, *Formative Evaluation of Pacific Provider-based Family Violence Services* (Wellington: Pasefika Proud, 2016)*.

[80] Ellsberg et al., "Prevention of violence."

[81] Diana J. Arango et al., *Interventions to Prevent or Reduce Violence against Women and Girls: A Systematic Review of Reviews* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2014).

[82] Sandra Dickson and Gwenda M. Willis, "Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand: A Survey of Prevention Activities," *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* 29, no. 2 (2017).

[83] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II.*

[84] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II,* page 5.

[85] Dickson, *Preventing sexual violence: a stocktake.*

authorities[86]. A 2015 New Zealand Family Violence (NZFVC) issues paper on mobilising communities to prevent family violence outlined a number of successful community-led initiatives in Aotearoa[87].

More recently, articles and reports have identified valuable impacts specifically from te ao Māori and tikanga-Māori led initiatives. McBreen looked at what could be learned from 20 years of Te Kawa o te Ako, Te Wānanga o Raukawa's kaupapa solution to support and maintain a culture for learning and teaching including safety[88]. The article documents the challenges and changes over time and highlights how initiatives can create and foster collective responsibility for responding and holding people accountable when violence has occurred.

One example of the potential for impact is Tangaere and Hagen's[89] discussion of social innovation through whānau-led innovation that was grounded in Tikanga Māori. They highlight two examples where a network of whānau worked together with government agencies and other stakeholders as equal partners, and whānau were supported to lead the design process. The initiatives led to reaching more families than traditional services, better housing, community leadership and employment for whānau, recognition of whānau knowledge and expertise; resources allocated differently; and attitude shifts within systems and the people working in those systems. Whānau also found the experiences empowering and healing as a result of their experience of equal power sharing and influence with agencies. The initiatives build capacity particularly for whānau, create new relationships and shift power to communities and whānau. These changes offer an opportunity to address systemic inequities and historic injustices by shifting power, changing priorities and challenging system norms.

International case studies have found similar positive impacts. For example, a 2023 review of 40 community-based projects[90] that were funded by the Australian government to address violence against women and children found a range of benefits across communities including: building safer communities; involving community at multiple levels in prevention and response; extending and building relationships among service provides; supporting emerging workforce in violence prevention and response; ability to tailor responses to the community; and building on existing community strengths. The range of projects included initiatives led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse people (CALD), older women and disabled people. The projects were part of a short-term initiative funded by the Australian government as part of implementing the Australian National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

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[86] Grennell and Cram, "Evaluation of Amokura."

[87] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand.*

[88] McBreen, *Te Kawa o te Ako.*

[89] Tangaere and Hagen, "Tikanga-led design."

[90] Elizabeth Orr, Corina Backhouse, and Cuong La, *Evidence to action and local action as evidence: Findings from the Building Safe Communities for Women and their Children Action Research Support Initiative* (Sydney: Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, 2018).

Key elements for effective community-led initiatives to address violence

Many research reviews, evaluation reports and cases studies have documented the key elements of successful and effective community-led initiatives both in Aotearoa and internationally. These elements are consistently identified in the research for general community-based initiatives as well as Māori and Pacific community-based initiatives, though the language, context and concepts may be different. Here we provide a high-level summary of these key elements:

Community developed, led and owned[91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100]**:** Fundamental to community- based initiatives is that work is led by the community or the people in the community. This means that community lead from the start with 1) dialogue to identify the challenges, solutions and the plan, 2) enabling local people and community leaders to take action and role model, and 3) supporting collective responsibility for change, response and intervention. Inherent in community owning and leading, requires a sharing of power and therefore a shift in power from institutions and organisations to families, whānau and community.

Use existing relationships, systems and knowledge[101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108]: Genuine and trusting relationships are essential to the foundation of community work, and have been shown in some cases to be the only difference between effective or ineffective community collaborations. Initiatives should build on existing relationships. Community leaders are also central to success, acting as role models and guides for the wider community, and existing community leaders can foster and grow future community leaders. Communities often already have mechanisms that can be harnessed for connecting, engaging, coordinating and responding. However, it is important to consider and have

[91] McBreen, *Te Kawa o te Ako.*

[92] McBreen, "Ngā Mahi Rarohenga."

[93] Tangaere and Hagen, "Tikanga-led design."

[94] Lowe et al., "Mechanisms for community prevention."

[95] Urbis and Karen Milward, *Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Evidence Review* (Melbourne: Respect Victoria, 2023).

[96] Kyllie Cripps and Megan Davis, *Communities working to reduce Indigenous family violence* (Sydney: Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse, 2012).

[97] Grennell and Cram, "Evaluation of Amokura."

[98] Integrity Professionals Limited, *Formative Evaluation*.

[99] Ministry of Social Development, *Report of EAG*.

[100] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women.*

[101] Roguski, *'It's Not Ok' Evaluation.*

[102] Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention.*

[103] Tangaere and Hagen, "Tikanga-led design."

[104] Rachel Jewkes, Erin Stern, and Leane Ramsoomar, *Preventing violence against women and girls: Community activism approaches to shift harmful gender attitudes, roles and social norms* (What Works To Prevent Violence, 2019).

[105] Lowe et al., "Mechanisms for community prevention."

[106] Stuart Ross et al., "Providing an Integrated Response to Family Violence: Governance Attributes of Local Networks in Victoria," *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 75, no. 2 (2015).

[107] Cripps and Davis, *Communities working to reduce violence.*

[108] Grennell and Cram, "Evaluation of Amokura."

systems in place that ensure community leaders themselves do not use violence and do not have values or behaviours that condone or enable violence.

Require adequate long-term funding[109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125]. Overwhelming, the most consistent findings across two decades of research, was the need for long-term investment with researchers also calling out that short term funding cycles can compromise the effectiveness of initiatives. Research consistently found that community initiatives needed long term funding to effectively address family violence and sexual violence, with some calling for 18 to 36 months and others even longer of five to ten years of funding. This funding must support the initiatives to develop, engage and evaluate, as well as the activities that the initiative carries out.

Need coordination and support at both local and national levels[126, 127, 128,129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135]: In addition to funding, local communities need coordination and support at both the local and national level. At a local level, this includes sufficiently funded coordination in the form of local coordinators as well as support and resourcing for local champions, and local leadership. At the national level this includes coordination for local coordinators; guidance on theory and implementation; links to central government and national networks, national initiatives and campaigns that create a scaffolding for local work; and national level engagement, mandate and legitimacy.

[109] Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention.*
[110] Roguski, *'It's Not Ok' Evaluation.*
[111] Jewkes, Stern, and Ramsoomar, *Preventing VAWG: Community activism approach.*
[112] Urbis and Milward, *Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention.*
[113] Ross et al., "Integrated Response to Family Violence."
[114] Cripps and Davis, *Communities working to reduce violence.*
[115] Orr, Backhouse, and La, *Findings from Building Safe Communities.*
[116] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*
[117] Grennell and Cram, "Evaluation of Amokura."
[118] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand.*
[119] Integrity Professionals Limited, *Formative Evaluation.*
[120] Ministry of Social Development, *Report of EAG.*
[121] Murphy and Fanslow, *Building collaborations.*
[122] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women.*
[123] Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families, V*iolence within the disability sector*.
[124] Dickson, *Preventing sexual violence: a stocktake*.
[125] Dickson and Willis, "Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa".
[126] Roguski, *'It's Not Ok' Evaluation.*
[127] Ross et al., "Integrated Response to Family Violence."
[128] Orr, Backhouse, and La, *Findings from Building Safe Communities.*
[129] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand.*
[130] Ministry of Social Development, *Report of EAG.*
[131] Murphy and Fanslow, *Building collaborations.*
[132] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women.*
[133] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II.*
[134] Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families, *Violence within the disability sector.*
[135] Dickson, *Preventing sexual violence: a stocktake*.

Skilled people to coordinate and lead[136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144]: Community leaders and practitioners need access to ongoing support and opportunities to further learn and grow their skills and capability. It is essential that community leaders are also compensated for their time. Successful initiatives have also incorporated development of new community leaders to increase overall community capacity. In addition, to enable safe and effective wider engagement, training and education is often needed for the wider community participants in understanding violence including the drivers of violence. It's likely there may be community leaders who can deliver this training for their community, but support and funding is required to enable them to offer this training.

Strengths-based, holistic, focused on and led by family and whānau[145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154]: Repeatedly research has highlighted that initiatives which focus on identifying and building on existing community strengths and wellbeing fosters positive changes and enhances community wellbeing. In particular, cultural models and effective strategies look beyond the individual to the family and whānau. This focus is not only on building on individual family and whānau strengths, but specifically enables family and whānau to *lead* the initiatives.

Multi-level strategies[155, 156, 157]: Change is required at all levels, requiring initiatives that are multi-faceted, targeting multiple levels of community and system change. Successful initiatives are often complex, will have multiple simultaneous activities, and constantly evolve these activities. To achieve this, a large and broad range of people across the community should be enabled to be involved as part of a whole-of community response. These strategies and this level of engagement is long-term and requires funding that enables multi-year planning.

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[136] Tangaere and Hagen, "Tikanga-led design."

[137] Urbis and Milward, *Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention.*

[138] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*

[139] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand.*

[140] Integrity Professionals Limited, *Formative Evaluation.*

[141] Murphy and Fanslow, *Building collaborations.*

[142] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women.*

[143] Dickson, *Preventing sexual violence: a stocktake.*

[144] Dickson and Willis, "Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence in Aotearoa".

[145] Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention.*

[146] Tangaere and Hagen, "Tikanga-led design."

[147] Urbis and Milward, *Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention.*

[148] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*

[149] Pihama, Jenkins, and Middleton, *Family violence prevention for Māori.*

[150] Pihama, Simmonds, and Waitoki, *Te Taonga o Taku Ngākau.*

[151] Integrity Professionals Limited, *Formative Evaluation.*

[152] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women.*

[153] Percival et al., *Pacific pathways.*

[154] Crichton-Hill and Ioane, *Pasifika protective factors.*

[155] Jewkes, Stern, and Ramsoomar, *Preventing VAWG: Community activism approach.*

[156] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*

[157] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand.*

Supported by evidence-based theory and approaches including practice-based experience[158, 159, 160, 161]: Research reviews regularly highlighted the importance of initiatives that are based on evidence, often referring to traditional models of research evidence missing the value of practice-based evidence, Māori mātauranga and other forms of Indigenous and ethnic knowledge. Researchers of SASA! one of the most robustly researched community-based initiatives wrote "…while drawing on the existing evidence-base is critical, there is no substitute for grounded expertise gained through deep programming experience." It highlights that evidence is not just the results of randomised controlled trials, but also includes decades of practitioner and community experience, along with cultural knowledge and practices that have been around for hundreds of years, such as those from te ao Māori.

Flexible and unique to the individual community[162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168]: Broad reviews continually show that initiatives are unsuccessful when they are not relevant, nor specific to the community and local context. When community-based initiatives are genuinely developed and led by the community and grounded in community strengths, the initiatives will be both unique and most effective. This is particularly important in recognising the value of initiatives that are developed by and for specific groups, particularly those who have been marginalised.

Drawing from mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori in order to create change[169, 170, 171, 172, 173,174, 175, 176, 177]: Kaupapa Māori researchers and practitioners have explored and documented Māori cultural understanding, frameworks and responses to family violence and sexual violence. Their work demonstrates how knowledge and practices drawing from mātauranga Māori and tikanga provide pathways for preventing and healing from violence, including family violence, sexual violence and historical trauma including colonisation and state violence. This work includes frameworks and in-depth discussion of concepts that can guide transformation from a state of violence to a state of hauora.

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[158] Jewkes, Stern, and Ramsoomar, *Preventing VAWG: Community activism approach.*
[159] Orr, Backhouse, and La, *Findings from Building Safe Communities.*
[160] Michau and Namy, *"SASA! Together*: An Evolution."
[161] Murphy and Fanslow, *Building collaborations.*
[162] Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention.*
[163] Michau and Namy, "SASA! Together: An Evolution."
[164] Jewkes, Stern, and Ramsoomar, *Preventing VAWG: Community activism approach.*
[165] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand.*
[166] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women.*
[167] Taskforce for Action on Violence Within Families, *Violence within the disability sector.*
[168] Dickson, *Preventing sexual violence: a stocktake*.
[169] Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence.*
[170] Pihama, Jenkins, and Middleton, *Family violence prevention for Māori.*
[171] Pihama and McRoberts, *Te Puāwaitanga o te Kākano.*
[172] McBreen, "Ngā Mahi Rarohenga."
[173] McBreen, *Te Kawa o te Ako.*
[174] Grennell and Cram, "Evaluation of Amokura."
[175] Tangaere and Hagen, "Tikanga-led design."
[176] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*
[177] Pihama, Simmonds, and Waitoki, *Te Taonga o Taku Ngākau.*

Most recently, He Waka Eke Noa is the first comprehensive study of violence centring the experience and expertise of Māori. The final report from this work was published in December 2023[178]. The report confirms the violence of colonising systems and structures, the ways the State harms Māori people and systems, and the potential of tikanga for collective safety and wellbeing.

This literature also offers examples of important perspectives and reflections to inspire different ways of responding and preventing violence for Kaupapa Māori and tauiwi approaches. However, these are not a list of 'tools' to choose from. As the Second Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence cautioned in their 2004 report on Transforming Whānau Violence – A Conceptual Framework[179]:

> "…the selective use of tikanga constructs taken out of context without proper monitoring of the application is unlikely to deliver the type of comprehensive response needed to prevent whānau violence. This type of approach in the opinion of the Taskforce creates more harm and makes the achievement of Māori therapeutic models even more removed."

Barriers to success

A 2012 NZFVC issues paper on family violence collaborations provides an extensive review of barriers to community collaboration[180]. The authors drew on interviews and insights from key informants in Aotearoa as well as a review of Aotearoa and international literature. The authors identified a wide range of barriers including: lack of clear policies and guidelines, ideological clashes, relationship and communication conflicts, lack of national leadership, lack of government guidance and support for local coordinators, lack of sustainable funding, and challenges unique to rural communities. The 2013 stocktake[180] of sexual violence prevention initiatives also found a similar wide range of challenges including: lack of funding particularly at the local level, lack of coordination and support at national level, lack of nationally shared resources, lack of time and resources within individual agencies, limited staff capacity due to competing priorities (especially crisis response), differing agendas among partners and range in community readiness to understand and engage.

These barriers have been consistently identified in other Aotearoa reports and research[181, 182, 183, 184, 185], particularly identifying short-term uncertain funding, lack of funding, lack of clear policies and government support, lack of national coordination, and inadequate support and engagement at a national level with local network coordinators. Short term intermittent funding has been found to

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[178] Pihama et al., *He Waka Eke Noa*.
[179] Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence*, page 11.
[180] Murphy and Fanslow, *Building collaborations.*
[181] Dickson, *Preventing sexual violence: a stocktake*.
[182] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II.*
[183] Roguski, *'It's Not Ok' Evaluation.*
[184] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand.*
[185] Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence, *Te Toiora Mata Tauherenga.*

have flow on effects[186, 187, 188, 189], preventing long term planning, limiting the impact and work of primary prevention, and affecting the ability of networks to keep local coordinators employed.

Literature with a focus on Māori and diverse communities has also identified that inappropriate approaches are ineffective and can lead to damage and harm, particularly by pathologising Māori and ethnic communities[190,191, 192]. Reports have also identified how narrow definitions and policy frameworks for violence that focus on the individual rather than the collective, do not reflect the need for healing for the wider whānau and community[193, 194, 195]. Further, approaches that rely solely on individual response or social norms without community ownership and multi-faceted approaches do not address the wider social inequities that enable violence[196].

These findings are consistent with international literature[197, 198,199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204] which consistently identifies:

- lack of funding and resources including short-term funding as a major barrier,
- implementing new strategies rather than building on existing initiatives and strengths,
- historic conflict in relationships,
- applying one size fits all approaches,
- not considering the unique strengths and challenges to each community,
- not considering the broader inequities that are embedded in social and institutional systems,
- using external actors to implement and drive change,
- and the variability of guidance and administration between regional commissioning individuals/agencies.

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[186] Murphy and Fanslow, *Building collaborations.*

[187] Hann and Trewartha, *Creating change: Mobilising New Zealand.*

[188] Roguski, *'It's Not Ok' Evaluation.*

[189] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II.*

[190] Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence.*

[191] Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention*.

[192] Dobbs and Eruera, *Kaupapa Māori wellbeing framework.*

[193] Pihama and McRoberts, *Te Puāwaitanga o te Kākano.*

[194] Kruger et al., *Transforming Whānau Violence.*

[195] Pihama et al., "Māori Definitions of Sexual Violence."

[196] Dutta et al., *Community-led culture-centered prevention.*

[197] Ross et al., "Integrated Response to Family Violence."

[198] Orr, Backhouse, and La, *Findings from Building Safe Communities.*

[199] Lowe et al., "Mechanisms for community prevention."

[200] Cripps and Davis, *Communities working to reduce violence.*

[201] Michau and Namy, "*SASA! Together*: An Evolution."

[202] Jenevieve Mannell and Anna Dadswell, "Preventing Intimate Partner Violence: Towards a Framework for Supporting Effective Community Mobilisation," *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 27, no. 3 (2017).

[203] Nicole Minckas, Geordan Shannon, and Jenevieve Mannell, "The role of participation and community mobilisation in preventing violence against women and girls: a programme review and critique," *Global Health Action* 13, no. 1 (2020).

[204] Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, and Williams, *Addressing violence against Indigenous women.*

OVERVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES IN AOTEAROA

Understanding how local family violence and sexual violence networks fit into and interact with the broader system is important. This section of the report provides a description of various collaborative structures and initiatives that impact upon or intersect with efforts to prevent and respond to family violence or sexual violence at the local level. A more detailed snapshot of existing local violence networks is outlined in the following section.

While extensive, the list below is not exhaustive and there are likely other relevant local, regional and national initiatives that are not captured within the scope of this report. What is apparent, however, is the clear lack of a plan in relation to family violence and sexual violence networks across government. This has contributed to a continuous cycle of 'new' initiatives layered over and competing with existing initiatives, along with a loss of focus and investment for existing and effective initiatives. The result of this lack of cohesive plan is an environment that is complex and multi-layered.

This 'messiness' is further exacerbated by the fact that terminology describing various initiatives is loose and often the same terms are used interchangeably for different initiatives. For example, the term 'integrated community responses' has been used as a catchall term that includes and interchanges coordinated case management responses, place-based initiatives, and family violence and sexual violence networks. This is in spite of the fact that these are all different approaches with different methods, goals and benefits.

It is important to distinguish between initiatives that focus on coordinating responses to a single individual or family who is experiencing violence (i.e. integrated case management such as integrated safety responses) and those that seek to engage with or mobilise the community to address, respond and prevent violence throughout their community (such as family violence and sexual violence networks). Investment is required in both prevention and crisis response, and networks have a unique and essential role in holding space for coordination and collaboration that crosses both prevention and intervention.

Local family violence and sexual violence networks

There are approximately 43 local family violence and sexual violence networks. Most of these are currently funded by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). While some networks receive funding through other sources including philanthropic and other public funding, the vast majority of networks rely on MSD funding to support baseline coordination activities. Many networks are organised by an employed network coordinator and hosted at a local community agency.

While often referred to as family violence networks, most networks also involve organisations and representatives from the sexual violence sector. While the networks vary from one community to the next, in part due to variations in funding, collectively the local networks facilitate and build relationships, foster good practice and information sharing, support network members in their work and lead community awareness and mobilisation activities addressing both family violence and

sexual violence. This work often spans both prevention, intervention and crisis response, again varying by resourcing, capacity and community need. These networks are discussed in further detail in the next section.

There are other locally-based groups of individuals and organisations who have formed networks to address violence. For example, the Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children[205] leads initiatives focused on preventing and responding to sexual violence and domestic violence. The Coalition is coordinated by the Te Wāhi Wāhine o Tāmaki Makaurau |Auckland Women's Centre and is made up of 18 organisations.

National violence networks and initiatives

While this project was specifically focused on local and regional networks, national networks also provide a pathway for implementing Te Aorerekura at the local level. This may be particularly so among communities where discrimination and historic and ongoing impacts of colonisation have isolated, marginalised and impacted on the capacity of individuals to connect and be active in their communities, including Māori, Pacific communities, Rainbow communities, ethnic communities, older people, children and young people, and Deaf and disabled people.

Currently there are a number of national networks with a specific focus related to family violence and sexual violence which include:

- **Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga | National Network of Family Violence Services[206]**: Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga | National Network of Family Violence Services is a national body representing a range of specialist family violence services across Aotearoa.
- **Te Ohaakii a Hine National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAH-NNEST)[207]**: Te Ohaakii a Hine National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAH-NNEST) is the national network of those providing specialist services for sexual violence prevention and intervention, and it represents individual specialists and about 40 specialist non-government organisations.
- **Tautoko Tāne Male Survivors Aotearoa[208]**: Tautoko Tāne Male Survivors Aotearoa provides national coordination and support for a network of independent services that support male survivors of sexual violence.
- **Rainbow Violence Prevention Network[209]**: The Rainbow Violence Prevention Network is a national collective of organisations and individuals who work in violence prevention with and for the Rainbow community.

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[205] Te Wāhi Wāhine o Tāmaki Mkaurau |Auckland Women's Centre. "Gender equity advocacy." Accessed 11 January 2024. https://awc.org.nz/community/gender-equity-advocacy/.

[206] https://nnfvs.org.nz

[207] https://toah-nnest.org.nz

[208] https://tautokotane.nz

[209] https://rvpn.nz

Work to implement Action 5 of Te Aorerekura has seen several new national networks and initiatives aimed at supporting connection across specific groups either launched or strengthened through additional government funding and with support from Te Puna Aonui. We understand these initiatives are funded through June 2024. At the time of this report in February 2024, Te Puna Aonui was exploring options for the future of these initiatives. These include:

- **He Roopuu Manaaki:** He Roopuu Manaaki is a tangata whenua working group established to explore mechanisms to bring together kaimahi Māori currently working across the family violence and sexual violence sectors and to feed into the implementation and monitoring of Te Aorerekura. The purpose is to create a sustainable place for the wider tangata whenua family violence and sexual violence sectors to stay connected, network across communities and sectors and share work and projects. The funding has provided for a dedicated coordinator role, supported by the wider rōpū. Alongside online forums, the rōpū facilitated a waananga in Waikato in October 2023, with further waananga planned for 2024. The rōpū also provides an on-going contribution as a critical friend to the Te Puna Aonui Business Unit to test early thinking and advice to ensure it aligns with the goals and aspirations of tangata whenua.

- **Pacific Practitioners Forum:** Pacific practitioners working in family violence and sexual violence began meeting online nationally in 2022 with coordination facilitated through Te Puna Aonui. Practitioners called for a national in-person forum led by and for practitioners. Te Puna Aonui provided funding for one year for a part-time national coordinator and part-time administrative support. The inaugural National Pacific Practitioners' Fono was held in July 2023 to bring together Pacific non-governmental organisations and community practitioners working in the areas of family violence and sexual violence. The fono has helped launched regional forums in six locations in 2023 and 2024.[210] According to the National Pacific Practitioners Fono report 2023 "The Pacific Practitioners Forum serves as an enduring engagement platform to enable Pacific practitioners working in the areas of family violence and/or sexual violence to provide advice to Te Puna Aonui on the implementation and learning and monitoring of Te Aorerekura, and to share information and knowledge amongst members to strengthen and inform their work and advocate for priority areas as defined by the forum."[211]

- **Ethnic Communities Network**: The Ethnic Communities Network was launched in August 2023. The launch of the national network was through Te Puna Aonui in relation to Te Aorerekura Shift Two. The network will help "…to strengthen collaboration across ethnic providers, working together to identify and work towards responsive violence prevention strategies for communities and to collectively feed into the government's work." [212] The

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[210] Key informant, conversation, November 2023.

[211] National Pacific Practitioners' Fono Report 2023. https://pasefikaproud.co.nz/assets/Uploads/National-Pacific-Practitioners-Fono-Report-2023.pdf

[212] Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government, "Ethnic network joins community voices to eliminate family violence and sexual violence," Releases, 25 August 2023, https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/ethnic-network-joins-community-voices-eliminate-family-violence-and-sexual-violence.

network includes organisations and private practitioners who work with victims of family violence and sexual violence[213].

- **Interim Disability Reference Group**: Following consultation with the disability community for the development of Te Aorerekura, Te Puna Aonui commissioned Disabled People's Assembly to explore the disabled community's wishes for networking. While this work was underway, responding to calls from Te Kāhui Tika Tangata | Human Rights Commission and an immediate need for engagement with disabled people, an Interim Disability Reference Group was established. In response to the report by Disabled People's Assembly, a National Disability Expert Advisory Board was to be formed[214]. However, the Expert Advisory Board has not been established and the report from Disabled People's Assembly has not been publicly released[215].

- **Regional elder abuse network pilot**: An advisor from the Office for Seniors has been working to coordinate regionally-based elder abuse pilots in six locations. These initiatives are focused on raising awareness, prevention and relationship building. One location has also explored a coordinated case management focus. For example, Age Concern and Te Ahi Ka have been engaging older people in co-designing in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland.

- **Expert Advisory Group for Children and Young People involving young people**: Te Puna Aonui Business Unit has convened a group of adults with expertise in child participation, and young people from diverse communities, to provide advice on how to enable the participation of children and young people in the implementation of Te Aorerekura. This work has involved Mana Mokopuna (the Children and Young People's Commission) and engagement with youth workers and others who work with children and young people.[216]

There are also national bodies that may have a dedicated focus on violence, but their coordination is focused on service provision for organisational members, such as the National Collective of Women's Refuge or Age Concern. There are also other organisations in Aotearoa that provide national coordination of individuals, service providers and organisations in related service areas, such as Social Service Providers Aotearoa, Ara Taiohi, Rural Women's Network, Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand and many others. While many of the people and services in their networks may work with people affected by family violence or sexual violence, the national coordination does not have a dedicated focus on violence.

Regional and other local collaborative initiatives addressing family violence and sexual violence

Some of these initiatives were specifically developed to address family violence and sexual violence, however others were developed with broader goals around addressing social need and growing

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[213] Te Tari Mātāwaka | Ministry for Ethnic Communities, "Ethnic Voices - October 2023," *Ministry for Ethnic Communities Newsletter*, 2023, https://createsend.com/t/j-258ECCA07C81C7572540EF23F30FEDED.

[214] Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government, "Ethnic network joins community."

[215] Key informant, conversation, November 2023.

[216] Te Puna Aonui Business Unit staff, Personal email communication, February 2024.

wellbeing (but are inclusive of addressing the drivers of violence). We outline these below.

Interagency family violence case management or coordinated response: Over the past 20 years, government has funded a range of initiatives and pilots for locally-based individual interagency case management and coordination, primarily led by police. Over time some names have changed and new initiatives have replaced previous initiatives. Currently, the following initiatives are active:

- **SAM (Safety Assessment Meeting) tables:** There are SAM tables in 46 communities around Aotearoa. They are generally established by Police and use a range of models such as Family Violence Interagency Response System (FVIARS) or Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke. They may be known by different names depending on the community. Starting in 2020, non-government organisations (NGOs) can apply to MSD for funding to participate in SAM tables.[217]
- **Integrated Safety Response (ISR)**: There is an ISR in two locations: Canterbury and Waikato. ISR is a locally-based multi-agency case management and intervention approach that works with victims and perpetrators of family violence to prevent further violence. It is hosted by Police and brings together other government agencies, local iwi, specialist family violence non-government organisations and kaupapa Māori services.[218]
- **Multi-Disciplinary Cross Agency Team (MDCAT)**: This is located in Counties Manukau and provides wraparound support to families and whānau in crisis. Government, non-government and iwi and kaupapa Māori service providers are co-located.[219]
- **VIP coordinators:** Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand funds the Violence Intervention Programme (VIP) at health services throughout the country (formerly based at all District Health Boards) to implement the Ministry of Health Family Violence Assessment and Intervention Guideline. This funding provides coordinators to support healthcare providers to be able to carry out child abuse and intimate partner violence assessment and intervention, and to facilitate links with other agencies and service providers. Local coordinators are supported by a national coordinator.
- **Safeguarding Adults from Abuse**: This is an interagency safeguarding approach to reporting, investigation and responding to alleged or identified family harm and other forms of abuse, neglect or harm to vulnerable adults[220].

There is often overlap and strong relationships between local family violence networks, and the organisational representatives who participate in the above initiatives. For example, VIP coordinators often participate in local family violence networks and have strong relationships with

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[217] Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, "Supporting community-led responses to family violence," About us and our work, accessed 6 December 2023, https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/initiatives/family-and-sexual-violence/sam-tables-project.html.

[218] Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa | New Zealand Police, "Integrated Safety Response (ISR)," Programmes and initiatives, accessed 11 January 2024, https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/programmes-and-initiatives/integrated-safety-response-isr.

[219] Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government, "Wellbeing of whānau at heart of new hub," Releases, 7 July 2020, https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/wellbeing-whanau-heart-new-hub.

[220] Moore, *Sexual violence prevention initiatives for disabled people*.

network coordinators. Likewise, about half of the local violence network coordinators we surveyed participate in interagency case management (such as SAMs tables or ISR).

Place-based initiatives are locally based collaborative approaches to address the needs of at-risk children and families. These approaches bring together local decision makers and practitioners from social agencies, iwi and non-government organisations (NGOs) to work with families and whānau to find out what works in their communities. These initiatives have been funding through a mix of government agencies including MSD. There are a number of active place-based initiatives such as:

- **Whiria Te Muka**: a partnership between Te Hiku Iwi and the Police to support Te Hiku whānau experiencing harm.[221]
- **South Auckland Social Wellbeing Board**: an agency-led initiative to bring together social sector leaders from government agencies and non-government chair to develop new cross-agency ways of working to meet complex and diverse needs of family and whānau.[222]
- **Manaaki Tairāwhiti**: a group of local iwi and social cross-sector leaders focused on working together in Tairāwhiti to deliver what is needed for whānau to flourish[223].

Again, there are often strong relationships and coordination between local violence networks and place-based initiatives, with organisations and representatives often participating in both initiatives to build and deepen relationships. In some cases local place-based initiatives have been established through local violence networks such as a grant to the North Shore Family Violence Prevention Network that funds collaborative social work roles, facilitation of the Safer Whānau case management forum and piloting MSD's Place-based Initiative Evaluation Framework with an independent contracted evaluator.

Fa'avae Ofanaki is a coalition of Pacific NGO providers in Tamaki Makaurau formed under the South Auckland Social Wellbeing Board to work in the areas of family violence, sexual violence and whānau resilience. It involves developing and testing a prototype that best responds to addressing family harm for Pacific families within South Auckland.

Integrated community responses (ICR) was outlined in a cabinet paper on the initial proposed package of family violence and sexual violence initiatives for funding in Budget 2019 as an initiative to "…expand cross-agency integrated responses at the community level" for family violence and sexual violence within the family[224]. However, the final Budget 2019 provided funding only to continuing existing interagency case management and coordination responses primarily led by

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[221] Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust, "Whiria Te Muka," accessed 11 January 2024, https://www.tehiku.iwi.nz/whiria-te-muka.

[222] South Auckland Social Wellbeing Board, "Who we are," accessed 11 January 2024, https://saswb.com/who-we-are.

[223] Manaaki Tairāwhiti, "Who we are," accessed 11 January 2024, https://www.mt.org.nz/who-we-are/.

[224] Tāhū of te Ture | Ministry of Justice. *Cabinet Paper: A package of family violence and sexual violence initiatives for Budget 2019* (Wellington: Tāhū of te Ture | Ministry of Justice, Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa, 3 December 2018), page 2.

police, and to establish regional support for workforce capacity and coordinated regional responses[225].

Budget 2022 included funding for community-led response related to Shift One and Shift Two of Te Aorerekura. This included funding "…to strengthen the existing Integrated Community-led Response (ICR) approach, including increased learning and monitoring in existing localities and future expansion across New Zealand. Funding will enable the five existing community response localities – Whiria Te Muka/ Te Hiku, South Auckland Social Wellbeing Board, Waikato, Manaaki Tairāwhiti, Canterbury." [226] This allocation blends together funding for two types of initiatives – the Integrated Safety Response pilots in Canterbury and Waikato and place-based initiatives in the other locations.

Regional family violence governance groups

There are 12 Regional family violence governance groups, based around the 12 police districts. The groups vary across the country with different structures and meetings and are often chaired by Police or iwi. According to MSD[227]

> "These governance groups work to reduce family violence by bringing together diverse efforts, knowledge, and local expertise, to provide high level strategic oversight. This includes discussions on recent trends, approaches, and high-risk and high-profile cases, to inform effective strategies to reduce family violence in the community."

Non-government organisations (NGOs) and iwi can apply to MSD for funding to participate in regional governance groups. Conversations with key informants indicated that some local violence networks are involved with their local governance group and have a key role in providing connections between the regional governance and local communities. For example, the three local family violence network coordinators for Waitemata represent their communities and wider service providers as the NGO representatives on the Waitemata Family Violence Governance Group.

However, when asked about other regional networks or collaborative initiatives addressing violence, only one of 19 networks who responded to this survey question identified that there were Iwi-led and Police-led initiatives in their region. This may indicate gaps where some regional governance groups have not connected with the local family violence networks in their region. It may also be a symptom of the complex environment and variation in names for groups and initiatives throughout the country.

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[225] Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government, *Wellbeing Budget 2019: Family Violence and Sexual Violence Package* (Wellington: Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government, 2019).

[226] Te Puna Aonui, *Budget 2022: Investing in collective action to eliminate family violence and sexual violence* (Wellington: Te Puna Aonui, 2022), page 7.

[227] Ministry of Social Development, "Supporting community-led responses."

Regional Practice Leads

MSD has been working, in 2023, on developing these regional roles. It was noted in the MSD Budget 2022 briefing announcements that local family violence network coordinators (referred to as Family Violence Response Coordinators) would "…be instrumental in transitioning Regional Practice Leads into their roles within local communities." [228]

Key informants from MSD shared that these roles would be responsible for improving responses to family violence and sexual violence, improve regional capability in practice standards and support professional development and training.

In our focus groups, some local violence network coordinators said they had been consulted by MSD on these roles. In December 2023, it was unclear whether these roles would be implemented.

MSD provided this further update[229]:

> *"Over the last two years, MSD has been working with the Te Puna Aonui Business Unit on developing Integrated Community Responses (ICR). This work programme includes exploring what system infrastructure and funding is needed to better support family and sexual violence system, across areas such as prevention, multi-agency and network coordination and community-led solutions. The Ministry will continue working with the Te Puna Aonui Business Unit on the elements required for an effective and cohesive family and sexual violence system."*

National System Practice Leads and National Trainers

Four National System Practice Leads roles are based at Te Puna Aonui. These roles are responsible for "…building specialist expertise among NGOs, supporting continuous improvement and responsiveness to local needs, and connecting and sharing knowledge between the family violence and sexual violence systems" [230]. There are also six National Trainers based at Te Puna Aonui, four focused on family violence and two focused on sexual violence[231]. These roles are responsible for workforce development. These roles were implemented and filled in 2022 and 2023 and involve engagement with non-government organisations (NGOs) and community organisations.

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[228] Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development. "Continuing Family Violence Response Coordination services - Budget 2022." Accessed 11 January 2024. https://msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/budget/2022/factsheets/continuing-family-violence-response-coordination-services.html.
[229] Email communication, May 2024.
[230] Te Puna Aonui, "Te Puna Aonui E-Update: 28 October," *Te Puna Aonui Newsletter*, 2022, https://tepunaaonui.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/FINAL-October-E-update-Te-Puna-Aonui.pdf.
[231] Te Puna Aonui, "Te Puna Aonui E-Update: Matariki Edition: 13 July 2023," *Te Puna Aonui Newsletter*, 2023, https://tepunaaonui.govt.nz/assets/Newsletters/2023-Te-Puna-Aonui-July-E-Update.pdf.

Regional Public Service Commissioners

Regional Public Service Commissioners were established in 2019 to improve connections among public service leaders across the regions. According to Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission, Regional Public Service Commissioners:

> *"…are focused on the planning and delivery of wellbeing outcomes in their regions, and ensuring there is regional alignment and national level input where needed to achieve outcomes for communities. They also support the system and system leaders to work cohesively and credibly with local government iwi, Māori organisations, non-government organisations (NGOs) and regional stakeholders."* [232]

While their role is not specific to violence, Te Aorerekura highlights that the Commissioners will support communities to address violence:

> *"Many communities have identified eliminating family violence and sexual violence as a regional priority. This shift will ensure that government, tangata whenua, communities and specialist sectors come together to problem solve, share ideas and remove barriers. Regional Public Service Commissioners will use their mandate to convene and facilitate this approach."* [233]

Specifically, Action 7 of the Te Aorerekura Action plan states:

> *"Regional Public Service Commissioners (RSPCs) coordinate and lead on behalf of government in the regions. RSPCs will support and facilitate implementation to give effect to the family violence and sexual violence national strategy with communities."* [234]

There are 12 Commissioners that cover 15 regions. Our conversations with the Regional Public Service Office suggest that it is expected that the Commissioners would connect with local violence network coordinators in their regions, and provide support where and if needed. However, only 2 of 20 network coordinators reported that they or someone from their network was involved with either the Regional Leadership Forum or the Regional Public Service Commissioner in their area.

Other collaborative initiatives

There are other initiatives that may also support collaboration to address violence including:

Whānau ora uses a kaupapa Māori approach to improve the wellbeing of whānau as a group,

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[232] Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission, "Ngā rohe o Te Ratonga Tūmatanui | Public Service in the regions," Public Service System, accessed 7 November 2023, https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/system/regions/.

[233] New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Te Aorerekura*, page 41.

[234] New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Te Aorerekura: Action Plan*, page 19.

addressing individual needs within the context of families and whānau. There are three commissioning agencies:

- Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency works with whānau and families in the North Island.
- Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu works with whānau and families in the South Island.
- Pasifika Futures works with Pacific families across the country.

These agencies contract with Whānau ora and community providers including iwi, marae, education providers, church groups or land trusts, to deliver coordinated wrap-around services based on the needs and aspirations of whānau.

Ngā Tini Whetū is an early support programme for whānau across the North Island that involves collaboration between one of the Whānau Ora commissioning agencies (Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency for the North Island), Oranga Tamariki, ACC and Te Puni Kōkiri. The programme is designed to strengthen families and improve the safety and wellbeing of children.

Whānau Resilience is an initiative that was established in Budget 2018 through MSD. It brings together local providers based on Police regions to design services for their communities. Services are focused on providing support, including long term support, to eliminate violence and support whānau to live violence free. Services may be delivered by a collective. For example, The Brown Table is a collective of leaders from Tai Tokerau Māori and Pacific organisations working in social and health that work together[235]. A 2021 evaluation report noted that 89 provides or provider collectives were contracted to design their own Whānau Resilience services[236].

Strengthening Families is a government initiative, through Oranga Tamariki, to support inter-agency coordination among government agencies and community organisations working with families with children who need help and support. It does not specifically focus on addressing or responding to violence, but there is often significant overlap in the agencies involved and families experiencing violence may initially come to the attention of Strengthening Families. A 2020 evaluation noted "significant variations" around the country in who the programme is for, and in the coordinator role and function[237]. A key informant indicated that the Strengthening Families contracts and local management groups were disestablished in many communities in 2023. A small number of local coordinators and local management groups remain, as listed on the Strengthening Families website[238].

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[235] The Brown Table, "The Brown Table: Building whānau resilience. *Together*.," accessed 7 November 2023, https://www.thebrowntable.co.nz/.

[236] Chelsea Grootveld, Lisa Davies, and Rachelle Ehlert, *Evaluation report on the procurement and co-design of the Whānau Resilience programme* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2021).

[237] Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children, "The Strengthening Families Programme," 24 April 2020, https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/research/our-research/the-strengthening-families-programme/.

[238] Strengthening Families, "Contact us," accessed 11 January 2024, https://www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz/contact-us/.

Through the Nga Vaka o Kaiga Tapu programme with support from MSD and Pasefika Proud, the Cause Collective has been facilitating **Pacific ethnic specific community leaders** to come together to design and implement community-led solutions to violence in Pacific communities in New Zealand[239, 240, 241]. Communities have been progressively launching these solutions in 2023 and early 2024.

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[239] Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu, "Champions of Change," accessed 7 November 2023, https://ngavaka.nz/championsofchange/.

[240] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, "Pacific communities launch community-led solutions to violence," News, 13 February 2024, https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/pacific-communities-launch-community-led-solutions-violence.

[241] Key informant, conversation, August 2023.

THE EVOLUTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE NETWORKS IN AOTEAROA

National family violence and sexual violence networks

Communities and service providers began coordinating responses to family violence and sexual violence at a national level in the 1980s. These initiatives grew from the early locally based women's refuge and rape crisis responses from the women's movement in the 1970s. Māori and non-Māori women began organising in response to violence against women including rape and domestic violence. They provided services, education and prevention, advocacy and community coordination. This work was initially community-based, but as the need and opportunity expanded, national organisations were launched to help coordinate and support these local efforts including the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges in 1981, Te Kākano o te Whānau in 1985, and the National Collective of Rape Crisis and Related Groups in 1986. [242]

In 1988, Men of Aotearoa formed, a national network of men's groups working on addressing domestic violence. They would go on to become the Men for Non Violence Network in 1991, and eventually Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga | National Network of Stopping Violence Services in 1995[243], a co-gendered and bicultural organisation. Today they are known as Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga | National Network of Family Violence Services and are the national body that represents a range of specialist family violence services across Aotearoa[244]. Also in 1991, Te Rūnanga Tāne (Māori men's network) was established[245] but did not continue to exist as a national organisation.

In 1997, Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Trust (MSSAT) was established. Over the next decade, male survivors self-organised to establish locally based peer support services. Progressively this led to the establishment in 2015, of a national organisation – Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse, Aotearoa New Zealand[246] which has gone on to become Tautoko Tāne Male Survivors Aotearoa.

By early 2000, due to lack of funding and government support along with the significant demands of providing sexual violence services, the national Rape Crisis Office had closed and agency numbers had declined in the national organisations, Te Kākano and Rape Crisis. This prompted action from advocates and remaining organisations to establish the National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (NNEST) in 2005 and in 2006, the Māori caucus, Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri (NKM) of NNEST was formalised. In 2008, the organisation became known as Te Ohaakii a Hine National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAH-NNEST) in recognition of the NKM guiding principles, Te Ohaakii a

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[242] Anne Else, ed., *Women Together – Ngā Rōpū Wāhine o te Motu* (Wellington: Ngā Kōrero a ipurangi o Aotearoa | New Zealand History, 2018).

[243] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (NZFVC), "1990s," Timeline, last modified 2023, https://nzfvc.org.nz/?q=timeline/1990/1999.

[244] Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga | National Network of Family Violence Services, "Nau mai, haere mai ki te pāwaha o Te Kupenga," accessed 7 November 2023, https://nnfvs.org.nz/.

[245] NZFVC, "Timeline".

[246] Tautoko Tāne | Male Survivors Aotearoa, "About us: Our History," accessed 7 November 2023, https://tautokotane.nz/about-us/our-history/.

Hine.[247, 248] It is the national network for those providing specialist services for sexual violence prevention and intervention, and it represents individual specialists and about 40 specialist non-government organisations[249].

The formation of the Rainbow Violence Prevention Network started in 2018, when the TOAH-NNEST Tauiwi Caucus responded to a request from a group of individuals and Rainbow organisations who wanted to collaborate[250]. The Network has since grown and expanded their focus to address both family violence and sexual violence and includes organisations and individuals that work directly with and for the Rainbow community.

Local community-based violence networks: grassroots movements and Te Rito

At the local level, communities have been collaborating, coordinating and mobilising efforts to respond to and prevent family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa since at least the 1990s.

For example, in 1988 the Hut Family Violence Network was the first community-based inter-agency coordinating body established[251] and the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project (HAIP) was started in 1991 as "…a mainstream community response designed to monitor statutory agency responses to family violence within the Waikato rohe." [252] There is likely a much deeper and richer history of grassroots community movements, but this historically has not been well documented in written literature.

Local family violence networks have been funded and supported by government for 20 years. Formal central government funding and support for community-created and community-driven local family violence networks was established in 2003 through the Te Rito Fund through Child, Youth and Family.[253] The fund was developed as an initiative of Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy, launched in 2002. At the time, Te Rito was "…the Government's official response to, and framework for implementing, the family violence prevention plan of action

[247] Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence, *Te Toiora Mata Tauherenga - Report of the Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence, Incorporating Views of Te Ohaakii a Hine - National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together* (Wellington: Tāhū of te Ture | Ministry of Justice, Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government, 2009).

[248] Rachel Simon-Kumar, "The paradoxes of deliberation: 'Te Ohaakii a Hine — National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAH-NNEST)' and the Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence (2007—2009)." *Political Science 68*, no.1 (2016).

[249] Te Ohaakii a Hine - National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together, "About," accessed 7 November 2023, https://toah-nnest.org.nz/about/.

[250] Rainbow Violence Prevention Network, "Who we are," accessed 7 November 2023, https://rvpn.nz/who-we-are/.

[251] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (NZFVC), "1980s," Timeline, last modified 2023, https://nzfvc.org.nz/?q=timeline/1980/1989.

[252] Tu Oho Mai Services, "Ko Wai Mātou | Our Story, Vision & Values," About us, accessed 3 November 2023, https://www.tuuohomai.org.nz/about-tuuohomai/our-story-vision-values/.

[253] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II Collaborative Community Family Violence Prevention Fund* (Wellington: Family and Community Services, 2009).

released in September 2001." [254]

Two of the 18 actions in Te Rito strategy specifically addressed community coordination and community advocacy: Action 13: Public education/awareness (including community education, engagement and advocacy) and Action 14: Improve inter-agency coordination, collaboration and communication.

Work under Action 14 resulted in the initial contestable government funding for local community-based collaborative networks to prevent family violence in Budget 2003, known as the Te Rito Fund. The initial funding supported a limited number of local community-based family violence networks and varied as to whether it supported existing networks to grow or helped launch new networks. The funding did not initially cover community networks nation-wide.

The government has continued to provide funding for local family violence networks, primarily through the Ministry of Social Development [255, 256,257, 258, 259, 260]. This has enabled networks to develop across the country, with over 40 local violence networks currently in place (see Appendix A). However, the variability in approach to funding and diversity in the amount of funding provided has created diversity in terms of the capacity and capability of local violence networks across the country. The funding has also been consistently short-term/time-limited, unstable and inadequate.[261, 262]

While the government funding contracts have remained limited to family violence, communities and community networks have taken a broader and more inclusive approach including sexual violence services and advocates in their networks, and undertaking collaborative work that spans both family violence and sexual violence. However, siloed funding and infrastructure has continued to create challenges to cross sector collaboration.

The local family violence networks funded by MSD have previously been evaluated in 2006

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[254] Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social, *Te Rito: New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2002).

[255] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II*.

[256] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, *Family Violence Networks - Background and key messages* (New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2012).

[257] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, "Funding for Family Violence Focuses on Frontline Services," News, 6 April 2011, https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/funding-family-violence-focuses-frontline-services.

[258] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, "Family Violence Networks funded for another year," News, 25 May 2012, https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/family-violence-networks-funded-another-year.

[259] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, "Funding renewed for family violence networks," News, 24 May 2013, https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/funding-renewed-family-violence-networks.

[260] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, "2016 Budget: No new family violence money, Family Violence Networks refunded," News, 30 May 2016, https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/2016-budget-no-new-family-violence-money-family-violence-networks-refunded.

[261] Clare Murphy, and Janet Fanslow, *Building collaborations to eliminate family violence* (Issues Paper 1, Auckland: New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2012).

[262] Jorge Contesse, and Jeanmarie Fenrich, *It's Not Ok: New Zealand's Efforts to Eliminate Violence Against Women* (New York: Leitner Centre for International Law and Justice, 2009).

(unpublished but referenced in the 2009 review report) and reviewed in 2009 by MSD[263]. The 2009 report outlined the successful outcomes and impacts of the networks, identified challenges and made recommendations to ensure the continued success and impact of the networks with a focus on national coordination, long-term sustainability and funding, and formal support for local network coordinators.

The Expert Advisory Group on Family Violence, established by then Associate Minister for Social Development Tariana Turia, also made multiple recommendations calling for the support, continuation and sustainability of the local family violence networks in their 2013 report[264].

Local coordinated case management initiatives

Over this same period of time, government has also piloted and implemented several forms of locally-based, government-led individual case management and coordination. For example, Family Safety Teams (FST), Family Violence Interagency Response System (FVIARS), Integrated Safety Response (ISR) and SAM (Safety Assessment Meeting) tables.

These initiatives have been led by government agencies, most often NZ Police. They primarily focus on coordination of response services with a focus on coordinated case management for individuals or families experiencing violence. The cross-agency coordination has primarily been comprised of government agency representations across police, health, and care and protection.

These models are frequently confused with broader community coordination and forced to compete for funding against local networks and local community-led initiatives.

Te Aorerekura and the current environment

Te Aorerekura, the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, was launched in December 2021. It prioritises community action and community leadership. Shift Two specifically focuses on mobilising communities[265]:

> *"Te Aorerekura aims to build collective ownership for solutions, and support and resource integrated, community-led responses.*
>
> *This shift is about stronger relationships that enable better design, delivery and learning. This requires government to devolve some decisions and funding to communities while retaining clear responsibility for improving what government is accountable for delivering."*

Further, *Shift One: Towards strength-based wellbeing*, focuses on reorienting towards ora, to wellbeing and healing with a focus on building on the strengths of people and whānau:

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[263] Family and Community Services, *Review of the Te Rito Phase II*.

[264] Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, *Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Family Violence* (Wellington, Office of the Associate Minister for Social Development, 2013).

[265] New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Te Aorerekura*, page 38.

"Putting people and whānau at the centre means government agencies, tangata whenua, specialist sectors and communities can collaborate to design and invest in the services and supports that make the difference." [266]

Under these Shifts, the actions in Te Aorerekura Action Plan for the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence for 2021 – 2023 [267] that directly relate to and rely on the work of local violence networks include:

- Action 2: Agencies integrate community-led responses
- Action 5: Engage and value communities in collective monitoring, sharing and learning
- Action 7: Enable Te Aorerekura implementation in the regions.

The Action Plan sets out what the impacts on the system will be for all actions. For Actions 2, 5 and 7, this includes the following system impacts:

- "Communities design, lead and deliver solutions to affect change."
- "Government and communities work better together."

Budget 2022 included funding for community-led response related to Shift One and Shift Two. This included funding for "Resourcing for existing regional infrastructure will enable the continuation of the Family Violence Response Coordination networks [existing MSD funded local family violence networks]." [268]

This funding extended the local family violence network contracts for 2 years through June 2024 with funding provided through MSD. In the MSD Budget 2022 fact sheets it was stated that[269]:

- "Family Violence Response Coordinators [local family violence network coordinators] strengthen their local communities by improving inter-agency coordination, collaboration, and communication.
- This funding will ensure continuity of current service provision and retain the knowledge and expertise of the Family Violence Response Coordinators, which will be needed as Integrated Community-led Response initiatives are expanded.
- Integrated Community-led Response initiatives seek to support and enhance community-based responses to family violence, so that communities can create long-term, sustainable change.
- Family Violence Response Coordinators will be a part of building regional infrastructure to support an Integrated Community Response to family violence.

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[266] New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Te Aorerekura*, page 36.
[267] New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Te Aorerekura | The enduring spirit of affection: Action Plan for the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, December 2021 – December 2023* (Wellington: New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Government, 2021).
[268] Te Puna Aonui, *Budget 2022: Investing in collective action to eliminate family violence and sexual violence* (Wellington: Te Puna Aonui, 2022), page 7, https://tepunaaonui.govt.nz/assets/Resources/Budget/2022- Budget-Summary-of-Initiatives-FINAL.pdf.
[269] Ministry of Social Development, "Budget 2022," accessed 11 January 2024.

- These Coordinators will also be instrumental in transitioning Regional Practice Leads into their roles within local communities."

Local violence networks have already been contributing to the work of Te Aorerekura. Networks have been essential in providing feedback and advice to Te Puna Aonui as representatives of their local communities, and they have also helped facilitate engagement with the implementation of Te Aorerekura. Network coordinators often have a key role in ensuring community representation at integrated community-lead response models.

However, at the time of this report further funding for the local violence networks and national initiatives has not been confirmed and focus group participants from our research shared that they have been told that funding for the local violence networks is to be discontinued at the end of the current contracts in June 2024. The Ministry for Social Development began work on developing the Regional Practice Lead roles with $3.066 million allocated for these roles and has said "MSD will be working closely with communities to design these roles to ensure they are fit for purpose."[270] It is unconfirmed whether the work to develop and implement the Regional Practice Leads will progress.

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[270] Ministry of Social Development, "Supporting community-led responses."

CURRENT SNAPSHOT OF LOCAL FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE NETWORKS IN AOTEAROA

Currently, there are approximately 43 local family violence and sexual violence networks. There are significant variations between the amounts and types of funding provided to, and consequently capacity of, each of these networks. Below we summarise some of the key details of the 27 networks who completed our online survey and insights gathered from the focus groups.

Who is involved in local family violence and sexual violence networks in Aotearoa?

The networks that completed the survey represent a mix of urban and rural locations with a wide range in size, from networks as small as 8 members and as large as 50 members.

The networks have an open and accessible approach. One third had membership criteria, and this usually focused on common values and/or organisations that work in the broader health and social sector. No network charged fees for membership or participation. This open approach ensures broad engagement – most networks have representatives from all service areas including both family violence and sexual violence specialist providers, as well non-specialist providers as highlighted below:

What services are provided by the organisations in your network? Tick all that apply	# ticked of 23 responses
Family violence specialist services	23
Health and mental health services	22
Services for victims	22
Social services (housing, financial support, food, etc.)	22
Youth services	21
Sexual Violence specialist services	20
Services for perpetrators	20
Child focused programmes or services (parenting programmes, early childhood, etc.)	20
Police	20
Kaupapa Māori services (not iwi or hapū-based)	19
Community development	19
Iwi or hapū social services	17
Oranga Tamariki	17
Government (other than Police, Oranga Tamariki or Local Government)	17
Local government	16

It is notable that while the MSD Family Violence Network Guidelines[271] specifically focus on family violence, 20 of the 24 networks who answered this question also include specialist sexual violence services.

The networks who responded to our survey also indicated good levels of inclusivity overall as shown below:

Does the network include representatives from Tick all that apply	# ticked of 24 responses
Rainbow communities	11
Disabled people	13
Ethnic communities	13
Pacific communities	14
Mana whenua	14
Older people	20
Iwi or hapū based or Kaupapa Māori providers	21

However, networks often identified specific groups, organisations or communities that were missing unique to their network and community.

What activities are local networks undertaking?

The networks were organised and coordinated with 22 of 26 having or developing a strategy, 18 or 26 having or developing terms of reference and 24 of 27 having a dedicated coordinator. All but one network had regular meetings, with 12 of 24 meeting monthly and the others meeting either more or less frequently depending on the needs of their community.

Coordinators spent the greatest amount of their time on fostering good practice/information sharing and building and maintaining relationships between network members. They also spent significant time on building community awareness/mobilisation and activating the network through meetings, action plans and other activities. All coordinators spent time in all of these areas. About half also participated in some form of interagency case management (such as SAMs tables) or direct service provision. However, even when network coordinators were involved in case management or service provision, it was only a small portion of their overall time with nearly all reporting they did this work only some of the time or a little of the time.

As well as bringing people together to build relationships and share information, network coordinators also spoke about supporting the capacity and capability of network members through the collation and dissemination of relevant news and information via email newsletters. In most

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[271] Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, *Family Violence Network Guidelines* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2018).

areas these newsletters reach a much broader audience than the people who are able to meet face to face. The newsletters contain information about opportunities for workforce development, government consultation processes and reports, local events and news.

Most networks carried out a range of joint activities including but not limited to:

- coordinating the roll out of workforce development initiatives and tools such as the Entry to Expert framework (E2E) and Family Violence Specialist Organisational Standards (SOS) at the local level
- coordinating speakers or training opportunities for network members on specific focus areas such as strangulation, mental health, child protection and cultural competency
- sharing information and updates with network members
- providing a list of local services
- delivering collaborative community prevention campaigns
- making submissions or taking part in consultation processes
- creating resources such as pamphlets or posters
- organising regional conferences on family violence and sexual violence.

When asked what other things could be done if there was time, funding or mandate, coordinators identified more than 35 individual suggestions covering a range of areas. Many of these involved 'doing more' of the work they already do:

- training and workforce development
- education and awareness raising including online information
- community outreach and awareness
- primary prevention
- communication and support for network members including advising on policy and training
- running programmes for direct services
- developing and managing projects
- research and policy contribution
- case management
- strategic regional leadership.

What funding and access to resources do networks have?

Insecure and inadequate funding was one of the most significant challenges identified in both the survey and focus groups. When asked what roles and activities the MSD network contract supported, nearly all responses identified funding for network coordination and/or the network coordinator role. A smaller number identified funding of training, events and programmes, with some networks noting the funding did not support any activities or events beyond the network coordinator role and network meetings. Feedback from the focus groups identified that the limited funding meant many coordinators and networks were often limited to work that was free or low cost or had to spend time to seeking additional funding or donations to facilitate activities.

While some networks receive funding through other sources including philanthropic and other

public funding, the vast majority of networks rely on MSD funding to support baseline coordination activities. Only 9 had some other form of funding for the network beyond the MSD network contract. However, this was primarily MSD funding for non-government organisations (NGO) participation in SAM tables and funding for iwi and NGO participation in regional family violence groups. Only a handful of networks had received other government funding or one-off grants from either government or non-government funders.

While most coordinators had the essential resources to do their work such as an office, computer, phone and location to hold meetings, they identified additional resources that were needed including:

- administrative and IT support including software subscriptions and mobile phones
- budget/funding
- physical resources to assist in communication/community mobilisation activities including banners
- support with transportation to visit services and attend meetings (particularly for rural coordinators covering large geographical areas)
- non-tangible resources including induction, training and networking with other coordinators.

Who are the agencies that host networks?

A host agency refers to the organisation that holds the contract with the funding agency. According to the MSD Family Violence Network contract guidelines, host agencies are responsible for managing the funds and employing a coordinator or engaging an agency of the network to coordinate and manage the network.

Host agencies who hold the network contracts were evenly split with nearly half specialist violence organisations and nearly half non-specialist service providers. A small number of host agencies are the local council. Many host agencies participated in network activities in addition to managing the contract and employing the coordinator. It was notable that only 14 of 21 respondents said the host agency provided support or resources for the network and coordinator. Where there is a lack of support from the host agency this may be a result of the limited resources and capacity within the non-government sector who are predominantly the contract holders.

Discussion in focus groups explored the attributes of 'good' host agencies. The success of networks was more likely where:

- The host agency was seen to have 'standing' and was respected within the community.
- The host agency provided a strong backbone for the network including providing resources in kind.
- The coordinator was empowered to have autonomy, independence and decision-making capacity around network strategy and activities.
- The host agency was not seen to be competing with other network members for specialist

service provision contracts, or had good relationships and systems in place to manage conflicts of interest.

Host agencies that were perceived as disengaged or unsafe was an issue also raised in focus group discussions, with some coordinators reporting that they felt isolated and that they lacked the support they needed from their host agency. Examples of where the host agency and network coordination relationship were not functioning well included:

- conflicts of interest between the host agency and other members of the network,
- diversion of funding for network coordination to other service delivery activities within the host agency, and
- workplace bullying.

WHAT'S WORKING WELL?

Local family and sexual violence networks are a critical mechanism for implementing Te Aorerekura and there is significant potential to strengthen existing networks to enhance their effectiveness and impact. Shift 2 of Te Aorerekura, Towards Mobilising Communities, is described as:

> *"…bringing together and strengthening relationships between tangata whenua, central and local government, the specialist sector, communities and businesses to plan the responses and actions needed to eliminate violence."* [272]

Established local family violence and sexual violence networks are already providing a critical space for fostering connections between the groups described in the quote above. The barriers to participation in local networks are low and they are community-led. These existing local violence networks and network coordinators are deeply embedded within the communities in which they are situated and hold significant institutional and community knowledge.

Building and maintaining institutional knowledge and connecting the local, regional and national levels of the system

Local networks and network coordinators are deeply embedded within the communities in which they are situated and hold significant institutional and community memory at the local level. When speaking to the strengths of local networks, one survey respondent commented that networks were about:

> *"Community enabling ourselves and collective ownership of kaupapa. Not having one agency holding/owning the mahi."* [Survey respondent]

Other respondents commented on the way in which networks provided a way for people taking up family violence or sexual violence roles in their community to know what services are available and who they can connect to within those services. These connections support collaborative responses and knowledge of referral pathways across organisations:

> *"The Network here has been going for over 12 years and is well known in this community, it is supported by all local services and is open to all services in the area. When new workers begin in the area they are usually directed by their team to join the network. The Network email list is composed of over 300 people and 120 services."* [Survey respondent]

As well as connecting services and mobilising violence prevention activities across the local area, networks also provide critical pathways for feedback loops and strategic insights connecting the local to the regional and national levels of the system. As discussed above, this role of providing a conduit to understanding local needs has proved critically important during events over the past several years such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Auckland floods and Cyclone Gabriel.

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[272] Te Puna Aonui. "Hōkaitanga Rua: Shift 2: Towards mobilising communities," National Strategy, last modified 31 August 2022. https://tepunaaonui.govt.nz/national-strategy/shift-2/.

For example, alongside national family violence and sexual violence national networks, local violence network coordinators played a critical role in supporting a joined-up response during COVID-19. The existing infrastructure provided by local violence networks was a key factor in being able to connect and mobilise communities and government to meet the needs of family violence and sexual violence response services and the families and whānau they worked alongside within a dynamic and fast changing environment. Local network coordinators became critical conduits for identifying local needs during the COVID pandemic and maintaining ongoing feedback loops into central government and back down to the local level.

Supporting skilled, culturally competent and sustainable workforces

Local family violence and sexual violence networks are key sites for coordinating the roll out of workforce development initiatives and tools. For example, local violence networks have coordinated with the National Systems Leads and National Trainers to socialise the 'Entry to Expert' (E2E) and Specialist Organisation (SOS) tools launched from the National Strategy, Te Aorerekura, within their local areas.

Networks also play a key role in identifying gaps and local needs and mobilising resources and effort to address these. One survey respondent commented that:

> "Members of the [regional network] agencies have made it really clear that they want us to provide training opportunities for them, so this is our focus. We have no budget for this but we have a training component at most meetings and we provide 4 full day workshops throughout the year. We also provide other regional full day workshops, usually 2-3 per year. Some assistance to do this would be really beneficial." [Survey respondent]

Another survey respondent spoke about collaborating with a neighbouring network to understand what was needed in relation to programmes available for men in their region:

> "Last year I collaborated with the Hutt Valley Coordinator to organise a workshop to look at programmes that are available for men in our region and to identify the gaps. 100 people attended the workshop and from those people we chose around 30 working in this space.
> These people attended a further 2 x workshops looking into the programmes that are in place and identifying wants and needs. This group is now around 15 men who are in the process of forming an advisory group with some wonderful, innovative ideas." [Survey respondent]

Networks and network coordinators are uniquely placed in holding this level of understanding of local capacity, needs and context, and there is a significant risk that this local expertise may be lost if the value of local networks is not better understood and acknowledged at the national level.

Harnessing the strategic potential of networks

Many network coordinators are also involved with various locally implemented initiatives described in previous sections of this report. For example, 7 network coordinators participate in SAM tables or ISR meetings, and 5 participate in sexual violence coordinated or integrated responses. Network coordinators were also aware of other local or regional initiatives in their area including place-based initiatives and Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke.

In focus groups, local network coordinators spoke about undertaking strategic roles in collaborative initiatives representing the community and NGO sector. In particular, they described how their role as the network coordinator both gave them a mandate to represent community and NGOs but also ensured their accountability to the community and local NGOs. Because network coordinators are not responsible to individual agencies, they are able and responsible for representing the broad range of NGOs and community voices. When speaking about their experience representing the network in regional governance groups, one focus group participant reflected that:

> "The people from a government perspective hold the level of authority or decision making but don't necessarily have a hands on understanding of the family violence portfolio for their organisation so that's the uniqueness we bring." [Focus group participant]

> "We have a foot in both spaces – we are very connected to what is happening in the front line but we are also involved in these strategic level conversations. Which is where we get frustrated because when we are in these strategic spaces we are speaking to things we know are happening down here [at the local practice level] and it just goes over the heads of the government partners". [Focus group participant]

Many local network coordinators also attend and contribute to the Systems Working Group (SWG), which is charged with providing an ongoing feedback mechanism between community and government. This national online forum, facilitated by representatives from the national violence networks, brings together community stakeholders with government officials. It has become a means of both updating community providers and advocates on government programmes of work relating to the implementation of Te Aorerekura while at the same time enabling the community representatives to raise awareness with government of issues they are facing at the local and regional level.

Holding spaces to activate primary prevention initiatives while also supporting joined up responses

Local family violence and sexual violence networks are a key site for mobilising local communities around primary prevention activities. Most of the network coordinators that responded to the survey and took part in focus groups spoke about primary prevention as being a core part of their work.

However, holding this space has been an ongoing challenge as resources and focus are frequently pulled towards direct responses to family violence and sexual violence. One survey respondent

captured this tension, noting that:

> "Acute work, such as the SAM table will always take priority over prevention or other community-based activities. Both are important functions but should be kept distinct to prevent the loss of emphasis on prevention when acute volumes increase (which they continue to do). As noted earlier, this is not an issue for our Network where the roles are separate." [Survey respondent]

While the above network was able to maintain distinct roles for prevention and response, it was more common to hear from network coordinators who moved between these two areas of work. Investment is required in both prevention and crisis response, and networks have a unique and essential role in holding space for coordination and collaboration that crosses both prevention and intervention. Furthermore, the work of integrated case management systems such as SAMs tables is supported and enhanced by the wider relationships that networks help to build across communities. People knowing what services are available and who is working within the community in different roles supports referral pathways and helps efforts to wrap supports around families and whānau in need beyond the initial crisis response.

Collaboration and coordination between networks

Collaboration across local networks is also evident within some regions, although this is not consistent across the country. There are some examples where collaboration across local networks has become embedded and is working well. For example, Waitematā Wellbeing is an initiative that represents a partnership between North Shore Family Violence Prevention Network, the WAVES (Waitakere) Network and Te Rito Rodney. Activated in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the quarterly forum is an integrated community response forum aimed at providing community and government agencies the:

> "opportunity to share response, capability, capacity, identify emerging local needs / trends and explore collaborative solutions. [...] The forum also supports professionals working to support others during very exceptional circumstances." [273]

This collaboration has evolved beyond the quarterly forum to include other joint strategic projects. There were also other examples cited of collaboration across local networks in the Wellington region, Bay of Plenty and Waikato.

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[273] Te Runanga Ratonga Hapori o Te Raki-Pai-Whenua | Auckland North Community and Development, "Waitemata Wellbeing: A collective district-wide Family Violence Response," accessed 7 November 2023, https://ancad.org.nz/programmes/waitemata-wellbeing/.

CHALLENGES FOR AND OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN NETWORKS

While there is a lot that is currently working well for local family violence and sexual violence networks in Aotearoa, there are also a number of significant barriers that prevent networks from being as effective as they could be.

Strategic focus, buy in and visibility within government

There is a lack of a cohesive plan in relation to family violence and sexual violence networks across government. This creates a continuous cycle of 'new' initiatives layered over and competing with existing initiatives, along with a loss of focus and investment for existing effective initiatives.

There appears to be little to no coordination between the different central government agencies' attempts to deliver programmes of work at the local and regional level, with a constant layering of new initiatives and roles over the top of existing structures. Over the past 20 years, government has piloted and implemented several forms of locally-based government-led individual case management and coordination including Family Safety Teams (FST), Family Violence Interagency Response System (FVIARS), Family Harm Multi-Disciplinary Governance Collectives (FHMDGCs), Integrated Safety Responses (ISR) and SAM (Safety Assessment Meeting) tables. More recently Place-based initiatives (PBIs) and Regional Public Service Commissioners have added to the complexity of collaborative initiatives implemented within communities.

The ability of local family violence and sexual violence networks – which are community-led and underfunded - to remain visible within this increasingly crowded and complex environment is extremely challenging. It was evident speaking with key informants, both working within government and outside of government, that there is very limited understanding on the part of government funders of the different purpose and functions of 'networks' as opposed to integrated case management.

This lack of a cohesive plan at the national level has resulted in a lack of clarity around the purpose and strategy for network coordination at the local level. The survey results indicated that local networks are engaged in a very wide range of activities, ranging from mobilising communities around primary prevention initiatives, to supporting workforce development, to participation within Safety Assessment Meeting (SAM) tables and case management. Furthermore, when asked what coordinators and networks could do given more time, funding or mandate, or what activities *shouldn't* be part of network coordination, the responses were equally broad and overlapping. For example, some network coordinators were involved in case management processes, other respondents identified that they would like to be involved in case management but were not currently, while others were clear that case management should not be part of network coordination.

The stated purpose of local family violence networks outlined in the Ministry of Social

Development's Family Violence Guidelines[274] is equally broad:

> "From the family and whānau perspective, their safety, needs and aspirations are at the centre of the services provided and the community response to family violence. Services and network activities help people to draw on the strengths within their family, whānau and community and chart their own course for a healthy and violence-free future.
>
> Family Violence Network is also about community and government organisations working together to focus on effective, innovative and joined-up ways of meeting community needs around addressing and preventing family violence."

A lack of clarity of purpose makes it much more difficult to articulate the value and importance of building and maintaining local networks to key stakeholders within government and communities, impacting buy-in. Survey respondents and focus group participants reported feeling that there was a lack of visibility of local networks or recognition from government officials of the value local violence networks created and that this lack of visibility contributed to continued cycles of insecure and last-minute funding.

Allowing for diversity between local networks is important. However, there also needs to be clear understanding of the core role and purpose across all networks. This could be supported through investing in infrastructure including a national coordination role, which would assist bringing coordinators together, allowing for opportunities to share what is working within individual networks, building feedback loops between the local, regional and national levels of the system and also enabling opportunities to develop the coordination workforce.

Lack of resources to sustain effective networks into the future

This lack of a cohesive long-term plan for family violence and sexual violence local networks has resulted in funding and resourcing that has been short-term and piecemeal. Currently there is a serious risk that if decisions are not made imminently about future resourcing for the existing local networks, two decades of expertise and community initiatives may be lost.

The uncertainty over future funding for network coordination was a dominant feature within focus group discussions, with some participants noting they had been informed that funding would not be renewed after June 2024. It was also evident that coordinators had received differing levels of communication about future funding for local networks, although it was not possible to know whether these discrepancies resulted from missed communication with government contract relationship managers, or a lack of communication between coordinators and their host agencies.

However, irrespective of any decision on the part of government to fund local violence network contracts going forwards, it is evident that the insecurity of funding has been a persistent issue over many years. Focus group participants spoke about the way in which government funding for local

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[274] Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, *Family Violence Network Guidelines* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2018), p. 10.

networks had, except for the most recent contract, consisted of short-term contracts rolled over year-by-year for a significant period. Furthermore, some coordinators commented that they had been told multiple times over several years that the contract for the local family violence networks would cease, only to then see contracts renewed for a further term at the last minute[275, 276, 277, 278].

> "[Our biggest challenge is] not knowing whether the contract will continue. This can waste months of planning and work. Do we just continue or stop and see whether funding eventuates? Coordinators work in isolation most of the time. Despite making every effort to continue dialogue with MSD or ICR there is no communication coming our way. We organised monthly meetings to their availability and in over a year we have had no feedback. Nothing has changed." [Survey response]

This short-term, last-minute approach to funding has had a number of obvious impacts that have inhibited the potential of existing local violence networks. These impacts include challenges related to workforce development, planning and strategic development, and relationships within networks and communities.

As of December 2023, there is currently:

- No commitment on the part of the Ministry of Social Development to fund the existing Family Violence Response Coordination (the local family violence and sexual violence networks) beyond the end of June 2024.[279]
- No confirmed commitment on the part of Te Puna Aonui to fund the population specific national networks and initiatives established under Te Aorerekura beyond the end of 2024.
- A lack of clarity as to whether the proposed Regional Practice Lead roles that MSD consulted on in 2023 will now be implemented.

As such, there is significant urgency in understanding the value of the existing local violence networks, what is required to support and sustain these networks and how this in turn will support the implementation of Te Aorerekura moving forwards. If the current contracts supporting network coordination are ceased without any alternative structures put in place, there will be a significant loss of institutional knowledge and capacity at the local level. Rebuilding this network infrastructure from scratch is likely to take a long time and be costly when compared to looking at ways to

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[275] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse. "2016 Budget: No new family violence money, Family Violence Networks refunded." News. 30 May 2016. https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/2016-budget-no-new-family-violence-money-family-violence-networks-refunded.

[276] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse. "Family Violence Networks funded for another year." News. 25 May 2012. https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/family-violence-networks-funded-another-year.

[277] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse. "Funding for Family Violence Focuses on Frontline Services." News. 6 April 2011. https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/funding-family-violence-focuses-frontline-services.

[278] New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse. "Funding renewed for family violence networks." News. 24 May 2013. https://nzfvc.org.nz/news/funding-renewed-family-violence-networks.

[279] The Ministry of Social Development's Family Violence Sexual Violence Update dated 17 May 2024, announced that MSD contracts for Family Violence Response Coordination would be extended to June 2025, https://mailchi.mp/contact.msd.govt.nz/family-violence-and-sexual-violence-service-provider-update-may-2024.

strengthen and build on what already exists.

Network coordinators told us they had participated in conversations with government representatives reviewing the challenges, needs and opportunities for local violence networks in the past. This included discussion about revising the approach to contracting. Te Aorerekura also sets out that the government will use the new social sector commission approach, saying[280]:

> "Government agencies will increasingly adopt a relational approach to commissioning that emphasises trusted, meaningful relationships with partners that can be shown to work in ways that are safe and valued by the communities they serve."

However, the contracting guidelines for local family violence networks have not been changed since 2018[281].

Capacity of network coordinators and network members

The capacity of both network coordinators and network participants was cited as an ongoing challenge. There were significant differences in the number of hours dedicated to network coordination across different networks, ranging from 2 to 40 hours per week. This suggests that there is significant inequity of resourcing provided to different localities. The average number of hours was 25 hours per week. Less than half of coordinators (10 of 23) were close to full time hours (30-40 hours per week) and 11 of 24 survey respondents said they could do more if they had more time.

The capacity of network members to attend meetings and participate in collaborative network activities was also cited as a challenge. Discussion within focus groups suggests that this lack of capacity was seen as resulting from an over stretched workforce, with priority being given to meeting community demand for services over participating in network activities. This was despite network members acknowledging the value provided by networks and the importance of building and sustaining relationships across their community.

Tangata whenua want their own networks and spaces

Under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) tangata whenua have the right to tino rangatiratanga – the right to self-determination and autonomy. While existing local family violence networks are inclusive of tangata whenua, additional structures and spaces need to be strengthened and/or developed that are led by tangata whenua and that respond specifically to the needs and aspirations of tangata whenua.

The work undertaken by both Te Pūkotahitanga and He Roopuu Manaaki at different levels of the system is at an early stage, and is not without its challenges. As discussed earlier, colonisation and

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[280] New Zealand Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, *Te Aorerekura*, page 41.
[281] Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, *Family Violence Network Guidelines* (Wellington: Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | Ministry of Social Development, 2018).

systemic racism has led to decades of struggle by Māori organisations, iwi and hapū, to receive equitable recognition and resourcing for the work that they undertake with whānau. Māori organisations and workforce are overstretched and under resourced and this has proved a significant barrier to developing strong networks. Furthermore, there is a lack of trust in government. [282, 283]

Discussion with key informants for this report indicate that the priority for tangata whenua is to build stronger connections between kaimahi Māori working in family violence and sexual violence spaces. The desire for kaimahi Māori to have their own networks is strong, with key informants saying:

> "If we have space for waananga, we can support best practice according to what we know works for us."

> "We need to be able to learn from each other based on what works best for Māori. We have our own models of practice."

> "Having our own spaces to connect through whakapapa, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and according to our own tikanga is critical. It is about sharing knowledge – building a puna."

> "Tangata Whenua need independent resources to connect at the local and regional level in ways that work for us. This is our right under Te Tiriti."

Providing "feedback loops" to government, while important, was seen as being of secondary importance to the need to build stronger connections amongst tangata whenua working across family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa – although this might be possible further down the track.

Discussion also identified that currently there is no established peak body or national network that is specific to tangata whenua working in family violence or sexual violence mahi in Aotearoa. There is a need for some level of national coordination to maintain momentum and support action and mobilisation at the local level. While connections between Kaupapa Māori organisations working at the local level are important, it was also identified that connections needed to be developed across Aotearoa that would enable support to be wrapped around whānau if they moved between regions.

The key informants also said:

> "We want to be able to know who is working where as Māori and be able to connect to say "hey, there is a whānau moving into your area who need support – can you look out for them?"" [Key informant interview]

There is also potential for a national peak body or national network specific to tangata whenua to bring the spheres of family violence and sexual violence closer together, recognising that both of these manifestations of violence are a violation of whakapapa.

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[282] Leonie Pihama et al., *He Waka Eke Noa.*
[283] Office of the Auditor-General. *How well public organisations are supporting Whānau Ora and whānau-centred approaches* (Wellington: Office of the Auditor-General, 2023).

Key informants commented that resourcing to bring tangata whenua together needs to be long term – this work will take time:

> *"Regional wananga to get everyone on board are great, but we need to acknowledge that we are in the building phase and this takes time and patience to bring whānau along on the journey." [Key informant interview]*

As discussed earlier, funding for He Roopuu Manaaki is time limited, with a current end date of 30 June 2024. Resourcing for some form of national coordination that can continue to facilitate conversations amongst tangata whenua is needed along with ensuring that Te Pūkotahitanga becomes an enduring body.

Lack of visibility of sexual violence services participating in in existing local networks

Siloed funding and infrastructure continue to create challenges to cross sector collaboration. The participation of sexual violence services in local networks is also obscured by the fact that the local networks funded by MSD are referred to as 'family violence' networks. Almost all networks who responded to the survey reported that their network membership was inclusive of specialist sexual violence services (as well a broad array of other non-violence focused social services).

In spite of the intention of Te Puna Aonui to bridge the silos of individual government agencies engaged in family violence and sexual violence related activities, funding for local network coordination has largely been situated within the Ministry for Social Development (MSD). As local networks may be seen as MSD networks only, this limits other central government agencies understanding and visibility of the existing networks and the breadth and significance of their impact. This means the power and potential of local community networks is missed at a strategic level.

A shift towards 'regions' as key sites for action

It is also evident that there is an increasing focus on 'regions' as key sites for action. The focus on Regional Public Service Commissioners in Te Aorerekura, the proposed Regional Practice Leads and Place-based Initiatives are all examples of this increased focus. While building and strengthening systems at the regional level is important, these initiatives do not replace the need for local networks.

Networks and network coordinators embedded in local communities provide a cohesive voice at the community level that is distinct from what happens at a regional level. Creating new network infrastructure at the regional level, such as the Regional Practice Leads discussed earlier in this report, will likely bring benefits in terms of strengthening the system as a whole. However, this should not be seen as an alternative to a model that includes local networks. A key informant representing a national network interviewed for this report noted their concern that there was a risk of "losing the local to the regional and the national to the regional". Further, defining what is meant

by 'region' and where regional boundaries may lie across Aotearoa is very difficult, given the inconsistencies between regions as operationalised by government agencies and the intersecting and overlapping relationships to whenua for iwi and hapū. There can be significant diversity within regions, for example between urban and rural centres.

A key informant reflected on a consultation they had participated in about the proposed new regional structures, commenting that:

> "We were asked specifically, you know what our thoughts were, and we said well at the very least we thought that depending on how you define regions, there needed to be a process that actually got all of the local networks within a region together and ask them what would be the best way to coordinate that regionally. And that perhaps might look like continuing local networks, but with some regional sort of oversight." [Key informant interview]

The key informant also spoke about the importance of local networks in helping the members of their national network and the national network in understanding what was happening at the local level:

> "Our job is to support our Members, but we actually really rely upon local family violence networks because they inform the work that our members do, and our members then inform us.
>
> Our staff meet quite regularly with network coordinators - that stuff at that local level helps us to understand what's happening regionally. And that for us would be a great loss if we lost that stuff at a local level. We lose the national picture, yeah, those feedback loops are really disrupted." [Key informant interview]

Recruitment and workforce development for network coordinators

The network coordinators are highly skilled with many having extensive training and experience in family violence and sexual violence before stepping into the role, some as much as 20 years. Yet, less than half received induction (8 of 17) and less than half received training or professional development as part of their role (10 of 22):

> "I received no training after accepting the role. I am still learning my role after 6 months in the job. I undertake any training available that is free and anything that costs has to be ticked off by my manager." [Survey response]

Common among their upskilling was developing skills on the job and continually seeking training opportunities, particularly free or low cost. One of the most common areas where coordinators sought further professional development was in facilitation. Most coordinators pro-actively sought and received peer support, identifying a range of formal and informal sources.

Recruitment into network coordination roles and retention of existing coordinators has been challenging. The continued precarity of funding for local violence networks has resulted in high levels of turnover of network coordinators in some areas. This has been exacerbated further by challenges and delays in recruiting replacements into roles and a subsequent lack of handover for incoming

coordinators. These gaps in coordination have in turn been destabilising for networks, reducing momentum and stalling collaborative activities. The turnover of network coordinators, some of whom had been in place for a number of years, also represents a significant loss of institutional and community knowledge.

Although the survey did not include questions relating to the length of tenure within network coordinator roles, approximately half of the participants within the focus groups identified that they had been in their existing roles for less than 12 months.

There is no formal funding or infrastructure providing national coordination or support for these networks. However, individual coordinators have taken personal initiative despite lack of funding or time, to provide coordination and communication among network coordinators.

Maintaining relationships within networks

When properly resourced, local networks provide an important space for fostering connections between organisations and individuals working at the local level that create connections between the family violence and sexual violence sector with the wider health and social services. The ability to develop and maintain relationships both within and across networks is critical to the success of networks. Network coordinators are highly skilled and essential in facilitating this work. However, a number of different factors were identified by survey respondents and focus group participants that create barriers to building effective relationships. These included:

- Perceived conflicts of interest between the host agency for network coordination contracts and other network members. This is shaped in large part by a competitive funding environment impeding collaboration between network members.
- Gatekeeping of who is perceived to have family violence or sexual violence expertise. This led in some instances to disagreements within networks about which organisations should host contracts for network coordination.

A further challenge to building and maintaining relationships within networks identified in both the survey and focus group discussions was the high turnover of government agency representatives as members of the community networks. The local violence networks were identified as playing a key role in inducting government employees into the local context of family violence and sexual violence service delivery. However, frustration was expressed that communities were investing effort and time into building relationships with people in key government agency roles only to see the people in the roles rapidly and regularly turn over, whereupon coordinators and networks then have to "start from scratch" in bringing new government representatives up to speed. This was also seen to impede the visibility of networks at the central government level, as the incoming government agencies representatives do not have the knowledge of local violence network activity to adequately report, and may still be learning the structures and systems for reporting within their agency.

Local challenges for networks

There were also a number of challenges identified through the survey and focus groups that were specific to the local context of different regions.

Networks located in rural areas face several challenges including covering large geographic areas. In these locations, bringing networks members together physically or travelling to meet with individual network members is more resource and time intensive. Some coordinators surveyed said that transportation was not covered by the network contract meaning they had to use private vehicles to visit members or to host meetings in different areas across the region that their network spanned. Likewise, the number and diversity of family violence and sexual violence specific services in some areas was a particular challenge outside of the main urban centres.

> "We cover a big geographical area, so face -to - face contact is limited. On the other hand, people know each other well and getting initiatives off the ground / getting buy in (e.g. for a White Ribbon Community Event) is relatively easy when one has invested and built up relationships." [Survey respondent]

The COVID-19 Pandemic and climate disasters occurring over the past several years have also resulted in impacts that are region specific. For example, the prolonged COVID-19 lockdown mandated for the Auckland region in 2021 put significant stress on network members responding to community need. Similarly, the floods that resulted from significant rain events in January 2023 and Cyclone Gabriel in February 2023 have had significant impacts for parts of Auckland, Tai Rāwhiti, Hawkes Bay and Te Tai Tōkerau.

At the same time, it is important to recognise the benefit of having an infrastructure of local networks in place that could be mobilised to support communities during these events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overarchingly, there is a need for government to recognise and strengthen existing networks rather than continuing a cycle of layering new initiatives across the top of what is working well for local communities. Below we make recommendations as to how government can interrupt this cycle and strengthen and build upon the existing impact of local family violence and sexual violence networks.

Develop a cohesive plan across all government agencies for local family violence and sexual violence networks.

1. A clear and cohesive long-term plan should be developed that articulates the role and value of local violence networks that aligns with Te Aorerekura Shift Two: Towards Mobilising Communities. This plan should:
    a. include a clear articulation of the purpose of networks and the high-level outcomes that are sought but also be flexible enough to be adapted to the particular contexts of individual networks and localities.
    b. map how local networks and coordinators connect to other parts of the system including Regional Practice Leads, national networks, Regional Public Service Commissioning structures and central government.
    c. acknowledge that the membership and focus of local networks is broader than just 'family violence' and is inclusive of sexual violence as well as healing and wellbeing.

    d. provide a clear mandate for and expectation that local networks and network coordinators contribute to strategy and policy development and are seen as key stakeholders in the implementation of Te Aorerekura.

Secure long-term funding for network coordination and community mobilisation activities

2. Secure long-term funding is needed to support of networks at all levels of the system. This includes networks operating at the local, regional and national levels.
3. This funding should be implemented in line with the Social Sector Commissioning Principles. These principles speak to the importance of ensuring that funding models take account of:
    c. the full range of costs in delivering services. The level of funding for individual networks should support a dedicated coordinator role as well as funding to support the delivery of community initiatives and evaluation.
    d. ensuring that funding is longer-term. "In general, funding timeframes should align with a commitment to sustainability of support, flexibility to respond to contextual

change and providing greater certainty for planning purposes." [284]

4. Given that networks are reflective of Te Puna Aonui in terms of diversity across sectors and Ministries, funding for networks should be centralised and administered by Te Puna Aonui, rather than sitting within individual Ministries.

5. Funding should be available for tangata whenua and diverse communities to coordinate and mobilise that is additional to and not in competition with broader local network and community initiatives.

Backbone infrastructure to support networks

6. Backbone infrastructure is needed to support individual coordinators, reduce isolation, assist in feedback loops, increase consistency across networks and provide guidance and support for best practice. Specifically, a national coordinator role should be established with responsibility for assisting with coordination across networks. This would also help to raise visibility of local networks to key stakeholders at regional and national levels.

7. This role should sit outside of government and hold budget sufficient to provide opportunities for local and regional coordinators to connect on a regular basis.

Understanding obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and enacting partnership with Māori

8. Māori individuals and organisations participate in current network structures, and it is imperative that existing networks are responsive to and inclusive of the needs of tangata whenua. Commissioning for network contracts should, at minimum, ensure that a demonstrated understanding of and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a key prerequisite for funding being allocated.

9. Tangata whenua will also create and participate in structures that are Māori-led/tikanga-led and which are aimed at connecting tangata whenua working in family violence, sexual violence and healing and wellbeing being contexts. They hold the authority to define the purpose of these structures. Funding should be allocated to support tangata whenua to develop these structures irrespective of their participation within other networks.

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[284] Ministry of Social Development, *Social Sector Commissioning 2022-2028 Action Plan* (Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The findings and recommendations from this project are substantively congruent with previous reports and evaluations relevant to discussions on local violence networks undertaken over many years. These have affirmed the importance of long-term funding, national coordination, and community leadership. Tangata Whenua have also been consistent in their messages about what is needed to create the optimum conditions for transformation.

Local networks are a critical part of the family violence and sexual violence system, however, it is evident that their role in the system is not always well understood by government agencies and decision makers. Local networks have not been well supported as a result and more needs to be done to support decision makers to understand the value and importance of family violence and sexual violence networks.

Family violence and sexual violence networks have a key role to play in the implementation of our national strategy, Te Aorerekura, at the local level. In particular in supporting '*Shift Two: Towards mobilising communities*,' but also '*Shift Three: Towards skilled, culturally competent and sustainable workforces*', '*Shift Four: Towards investment in primary prevention*' and '*Shift Five: Towards safe, accessible and integrated responses*'.

Local networks bring organisations and individuals together around a shared kaupapa of preventing and responding to family violence and sexual violence. Meeting together regularly and sharing information creates the opportunity to build collective understandings of what is working well in local communities and where the gaps are.

Through being embedded within communities, network coordinators are able to build trusted relationships that enable them to gather information and knowledge based on local experience and expertise, and use this to inform programmes of work at the regional and national levels.

There is an urgent need for government to decide whether supporting family violence and sexual violence networks is a key priority to support the implementation of Te Aorerekura. If supporting networks *is* considered important, a coherent a longer-term plan for strengthening existing networks is required.

We close this report with comments from one of our survey respondents:

> "*Family Harm Networks throughout Aotearoa are unique in that they collectively represent the largest membership of both NGO's and government agency representatives sharing a forum that focused on and addressed the issue of family violence, not just for individuals and their families, but also to lead change in our communities. Over many years, these networks have established strong trust-based relationships amongst their member organisations, built on regular hui, discussions of ideas for change, strategising, fund-raising, contributions to national initiatives, and working together on collaborative network projects in their regions. They are connected at a local community level, so are able to mobilise and respond to local trends and issues more rapidly than government agencies. Acknowledgement of their unique value within our regions is a necessary step to ensuring that these network connections are not lost through a lack of support by government.*" [Survey respondent]

APPENDIX A: FAMILY VIOLENCE NETWORKS IN AOTEAROA

Last updated April 2024. Find this list online at: https://nzfvc.org.nz/family-violence-networks

- Rodney: Te Rito Rodney Family Violence Prevention Project
- West Auckland: Waitakere Anti-Violence Essential Services
- North Auckland: North Shore Family Violence Prevention Network
- Central Auckland: SAFTINET
- Tāmaki: The HEART Team
- South Auckland: Safer Aotearoa Family Violence Prevention Network
- Waiheke Island: network hosted by Piritahi Hau Ora
- Hamilton: network hosted by Tuu Oho Mai
- Tauranga & Western Bay of Plenty: Tauranga Moana Abuse Prevention Strategy
- Whakatane, Opotiki & Eastern Bay of Plenty: hosted by Family Works Northern
- Hauraki/Thames: Hauraki Family Violence Intervention Network
- Rotorua: Rotorua Community Safer Families Network
- Matamata/Piako: network hosted by Morrinsville Community House
- Te Kuiti/Otorohanga: Violence Free Maniopoto c/o Waitomo Waipa Women's Refuge
- Te Awamutu/Cambridge: Violence Free Waipa
- Gisborne/Tairawhiti: Violence Free Tairawhiti Network
- Taupo: network hosted by REAP Central Plateau, Whānau services
- Hawkes Bay: LIVE Hawkes Bay
- Tararua: Tararua Abuse Intervention Network
- Taranaki: Taranaki Safe Families Trust
- Whanganui: Violence Intervention Network
- Manawatu: Manawatu Abuse Intervention Network
- Horowhenua: Horowhenua Abuse Liaison Team
- Wairarapa: Wairarapa Family Violence Network
- Kapiti: A Safe Kapiti
- Porirua: Porirua Community Family Violence Prevention Network
- Hutt Valley: Ahuru Mowai O Te Awakairangi | Network for a Violence Free Hutt Valley
- Wellington: Te Rito Wellington Network
- Motueka: Safe Families Motueka
- Golden Bay: network hosted by Mohua Social Services
- Blenheim: Marlborough Violence Intervention Project
- Kaikoura: Kaikoura Violence Free Network
- Westland and Grey: West Coast Te Rito Violence Prevention Network
- Westport: Kawatiri Family Harm Prevention
- Ashburton: Families Without Violence
- Christchurch: Canterbury Family Violence Collaboration
- North Canterbury: Violence Free North Canterbury Network
- South Canterbury: Te Rito South Canterbury Network
- Oamaru: network hosted by WDC Community Development Manager & Safer Waitaki Coordinator
- Dunedin: Dunedin Collaboration Against Family Violence
- Queenstown, Lakes & Districts & Central Otago: network hosted by Central Lakes Family Services
- South Otago, Balclutha: network hosted by Anglican Family Care
- Southland and Invercargill: Southland RESPECT Network

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