

Q&A

Joint venture model to lead prevention and reduction in family violence and sexual violence

Our vision is that everyone (person, whānau, family, community and agency) knows their role in responding to, and preventing family violence and sexual violence, and feels competent and resourced to act.

1. What are you announcing?

We're announcing a new way of working for government, to deliver the integrated approach that is needed to reduce family violence, sexual violence and violence within whānau.

Integrated practice across government and in communities can reduce family violence and sexual violence. Government must do things differently to achieve that integration.

This new way of working will bring chief executives together in a joint venture to deliver an integrated, whole-of-government approach to family violence and sexual violence. This will create a single point of accountability and leadership, as recommended by the sector and experts such as the Law Commission and the Family Violence Death Review Committee.

A Māori advisory group, Te Rōpū, will inform the work of the joint venture and the public will have the opportunity to contribute to a national strategy and action plan in family violence and sexual violence.

Changing the way government works will ensure victims are able to access the support they need more easily, and will increase our ability to hold perpetrators to account. We need a system that works for victims, perpetrators and children affected by violence.

2. What is a joint venture?

A joint venture will join up people and resources from across the public service to work on common issues. It creates collective responsibility for achieving an agreed set of outcomes, reflecting a different mindset and approach that can provide the sustained, cross-agency leadership and commitment necessary to deliver meaningful change.

3. What will it do?

The joint venture will enable a strategic overview of prevention, early intervention, crisis response and support for long-term recovery, that will be set out in a national strategy and action plan. Its role is to lead, integrate, and provide support for everyone involved, to ensure an effective whole-of-government response to family violence and sexual violence.

An early action will be to develop an ambitious national strategy and action plan. The strategy and action plan will galvanise our collective efforts – across government and working with whānau and communities – to reduce family violence, sexual violence and violence within whānau. This will set a clear direction for our collective commitment to reduce family violence and sexual violence, clarifying the most critical strategic objectives and identifying the actions required across the system.

Cabinet has also agreed that the joint venture will lead the preparation of a single, whole-of-government package for Budget 2019 to align and prioritise resources to reduce family violence and sexual violence. The joint venture will also lead the preparation of a collective annual report across all agencies to create a collective account of performance towards shared outcomes and a single point of accountability to Parliament and the public.

The government is focused on the wellbeing of children, families, whānau and communities so reducing family violence and sexual violence is essential. We need to bring all government agencies together to work differently with communities and the sector, to ensure we meet the needs of victims and survivors. The needs and priorities of victims and perpetrators, along with their families, will sit at the heart of all decisions and services.

4. Who is involved?

The joint venture will involve the Chief Executives who currently sit on the Social Wellbeing Board: the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Oranga Tamariki, Health, Te Puni Kōkiri, Social Development, Education and Justice, with the addition of Police, ACC and Corrections. Police, ACC and Corrections are included because these agencies have a critical role in the family violence and sexual violence system.

To support this joint venture, the Director of a dedicated business unit will report to these Chief Executives. In turn, they will report to the Under-Secretary, as the lead Minister. The lead Minister will be supported by a Ministerial Group comprising Justice, Social Development, Māori Development, Children and Seniors Ministers. The Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee will have overall Ministerial oversight for the joint venture and the integrated, whole-of-government work programme.

The joint venture will be informed by an independent Māori body (Te Rōpū) and a broadly-based external advisory group to support the government to work in partnership with the sector and to learn from the experience of victims, perpetrators, and children affected by violence. Building Māori partnership into the model, and ensuring those affected by violence are integral to our work, will help drive significant improvements in the system.

The joint venture will also work with existing advisory groups, reference groups, boards and panels to ensure wider stakeholder input. This will include groups such as rainbow, disability, youth, migrant communities, the E Tu Whānau reference group, and Pasefika Proud.

5. How will Te Rōpū be established?

Ensuring a partnership with Māori is a core component of the new way of working. An interim Te Rōpū is being established to work in partnership with the Crown, Ministers, and the joint venture to help develop and shape initial work on a national strategy to prevent and reduce family violence, sexual violence and violence within whānau.

The interim Te Rōpū will be appointed by the Lead Minister and the Minister of Māori Development and will comprise up to ten members who bring appropriate skills and expertise and who can reflect communities, rangatahi and whānau, urban and regional Māori and wāhine Māori. The group will help inform the terms of reference of the permanent Te Rōpū, with advice due by April 2019.

6. How is this different to the current approach?

Previous attempts at creating a whole-of-government response to family violence and sexual violence have lacked the mechanisms for delivering leadership and ensuring accountability.

The joint venture will enable much greater integration across government and drive different behaviours among Ministers, Chief Executives and government agencies to embed new and innovative ways of working. It will create a single point of leadership and accountability.

The joint venture will be informed by an independent Māori body (Te Rōpū) and wider stakeholders to support the government to work in partnership with the sector and to learn from the experience of victims, perpetrators, and children affected by violence. Building Māori partnership into the model, and ensuring those affected by violence are integral to our work, will help drive significant improvements in the system.

The joint venture will:

- Lead a whole-of-government work programme to reduce family violence and sexual violence.
- Have authority to provide strategic policy and funding advice on behalf of all agencies involved in the response to family violence and sexual violence, including collective Budget advice.
- Utilise levers for Ministers to collectively prioritise the allocation of funding to ensure effective delivery of a whole-of-government strategy and response.
- Provide strategic leadership of the approach to commissioning services, working alongside contracting agencies to reflect this in their funding strategies, including the development of new models of contracting.
- Ensure an enduring, sustained commitment to reducing family violence and sexual violence that binds all of the agencies involved.
- Be accountable to the public and to Parliament for the performance of this whole-of-government response – to substantially reduce family violence and sexual violence.

7. What difference will this make?

New Zealand has unacceptable rates of family violence and sexual violence which severely undermine the lifetime wellbeing of victims and their children. Every year, over 1 million New Zealanders are directly affected by family violence and sexual violence, including over 250,000 children. Over half of all homicides are the result of family violence and sexual violence – around 30 deaths every year. One in 10 older people experience abuse or neglect from a family member or carer.

Navigating the current system requires extraordinary effort from victims, perpetrators and children affected by violence, particularly those facing compounding forms of disadvantage,

such as Māori and those with a disability. The onus is placed on the victim to coordinate many providers (each with different eligibility criteria) to access the health, justice, housing, counselling, income support, and other services that they need to stay safe and move on with their lives.

Victims describe failures in the system such as: a workforce that doesn't fully understand the dynamics and risks around family violence and sexual violence making it difficult to get to safety; difficulty seeking psycho-social supports; a lack of support to navigate complex systems; difficulty being heard; and difficulty accessing the support they need to recover from trauma. These failures can be even more acute for children and young people who are victims.

Responsibility for addressing family violence and sexual violence is currently distributed across at least 10 government agencies. New ways of working across government and with iwi and communities are needed to deliver an integrated response that can meet the needs of victims, perpetrators and children affected by violence, to seriously disrupt the cycle of family violence and sexual violence.

The joint venture and the national strategy will clarify who is responsible for what, identify priorities for action across government and in communities, and guide investment in the most effective actions for prevention and early intervention.

This integrated practice can help to ensure the immediate safety of victims and children, hold perpetrators to account, and provide sustained, coordinated and comprehensive services to everyone affected by violence to support their long-term recovery.

8. How will the national strategy and action plan be developed?

A draft strategy and action plan will be developed before the end of the year, through a collaborative process that will involve victims, perpetrators and community experts. The interim Te Rōpū and a range of Māori experts will be invited to provide early advice on the design and development of the strategy. The Māori experts and wider stakeholder advisory groups will also have important roles in preparing the strategy, prioritising actions, and informing effective responses.

The strategy and action plan will also draw on the information communities have provided to government during past consultations on family violence, sexual violence and violence within whānau.

The draft strategy will be refined and developed through a formal consultation process. New Zealanders will be invited to contribute their ideas and aspirations through an open and engaging process. This work will contribute to, and be informed by, the development of the Child Wellbeing Strategy and other government priorities – reflecting the need for coordinated action to improve wellbeing more broadly.

9. Why has the government decided to do this?

Preventing and responding to family violence and sexual violence is one of our greatest opportunities to improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders. As such, all parties in government are committed to reducing family violence and sexual violence.

We recognise there are significant opportunities to improve current systems, to prevent violence, ensure victims are safe and hold perpetrators to account. The joint venture will ensure that government agencies are working together to deliver an integrated and coherent response to violence.

10. Have you consulted with Māori on this?

Yes. The current Multi-Agency Team on Family Violence and Sexual Violence has been working closely with 30 Māori experts and Te Puni Kōkiri to design a partnership model for the joint venture. This recognises the central place of kaupapa Māori solutions to family violence and sexual violence.

11. How can New Zealanders be involved?

All New Zealanders have a part to play in preventing and reducing family violence and sexual violence. Everyone will have the opportunity to comment on the draft strategy and action plan, including by identifying the actions that individuals, families/ whānau and communities can take. The Multi-Agency Team, which will become the business unit for the joint venture, produces an E newsletter update anyone is welcome to go on the email list. Anyone can contact the Multi-Agency Team to find out how they can be involved by emailing familyandsexualviolence@justice.govt.nz

Māori, whānau, hapū and iwi will have opportunities to feed into the work of the interim Te Rōpū and contribute ideas and expertise into the national strategy. The views and experiences of Māori, whānau, hapū and iwi are essential to enabling change and designing an effective strategy.

12. Who is the joint venture answerable to? (which Ministers?)

The Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice will be the Lead Minister for Family Violence and Sexual Violence, responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the work programme for the joint venture.

The Lead Minister will be supported by a Ministerial group comprising the Minister of Justice, the Minister for Social Development, the Minister for Children, the Minister for Seniors, and the Minister for Māori Development.

The Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee will have overall ministerial oversight of the joint venture, reflecting that the impacts of family violence and sexual violence sit across government.

Ministers on the Social Wellbeing Committee will also be collectively responsible for this whole-of-government work programme and individually responsible for the contributions of their portfolios and agencies to these shared goals.

13. When will the joint venture be up and running?

The Social Wellbeing Board Chief Executives are operating as the joint venture now. The Multi-Agency Team on Family Violence and Sexual Violence is transitioning to the business unit supporting the joint venture, with an acting Director. There will be a new identify for the business unit and a formal launch will take place before the end of the year.

14. Could other social issues be addressed through a joint venture?

Government has placed a strong emphasis on cross-agency and cross-portfolio actions to improve wellbeing. The joint venture uses existing powers, and an explicit Cabinet mandate, to work in new ways across government.

Proposed changes to the State Sector Act 1988, as recently agreed for consultation by Cabinet, would formalise this type of arrangement, allowing for a group of chief executives to collectively own and govern a formal joint venture. The joint venture approach offers the potential to transform the way government operates through new ways of working collectively on complex issues that extend beyond single agencies.

Currently, the government is focused on ensuring the success of the joint venture that will lead efforts to reduce family violence and sexual violence. It is likely that this joint venture approach will also be adopted in other policy areas.

15. What does this mean for the work on family violence and sexual violence already done in other agencies? Will the responsibilities of other agencies change?

We know that family violence and sexual violence are complex social issues that do not fit neatly into the boundaries of agencies and the sector. They are problems that generate demand across a wide range of public services and, consequently, all agencies involved have important insights and services to contribute to significantly reduce the harm caused. The joint venture will seek to harness those insights and ensure all of the relevant agencies are working coherently to deliver the responses required to reduce family violence and sexual violence.

The joint venture won't take over the role of other agencies. Its responsibility will be to ensure an effective whole-of-government response to family violence and sexual violence. Its role is to lead, integrate, and provide support for agencies.

16. How will this build on current innovations like the Integrated Safety Response/ Whangaia Ngā Pa Harakeke/ E Tu Whānau/ and Pasefika Proud?

The national strategy will identify actions required across government and in communities. It will also identify and advise on how the system gaps and failures should be addressed.

Where evaluations are identifying strengths of existing programmes these will be taken into account to ensure an effective system. One size doesn't fit all and we need a variety of interventions and innovations to meet the needs of different population groups.

17. How does this relate to the Family Violence Bill?

The Family Violence Bill provides some of the foundations for the transformation of the family violence response system by promoting consistent, collaborative responses to people experiencing family violence. The Bill identifies government and community organisations - "family violence agencies" – with specific responsibility for preventing and responding to family violence under the new legislation. The new law will improve family violence information sharing, enable the development of codes of practice, and create new pathways into services through Police Safety Orders and Family Court prescribed services.

For more information see [our website](#).