

# The People's Report

*The People's Inquiry into  
Addressing Child Abuse and Domestic Violence*

**2014**



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# CHAIRMAN'S

## Foreword



Child abuse and domestic violence have been occupying the minds of academics and policy-makers for a long time now in New Zealand. Reports have been written, recommendations made, and money spent, but the statistics keep getting worse. Family violence continues to claim many lives and ruin many others. Cynics might say the Glenn Inquiry is just the latest in a long line of well-meaning attempts to solve an unsolvable problem. To the contrary, I believe it has every chance of being a real catalyst for change, not least because of *The People's Report*.

The report is the first part of the Inquiry's work designing a better system for dealing with child abuse and domestic violence. What sets it apart is the way it has allowed so many victims and frontline workers to tell their stories in an unvarnished way. It gives them a genuine voice in exposing the strengths and weaknesses of the present system. The report does not dictate, rather it recites what those most affected by family violence say happened to them, what worked and what did not.

When I stepped down from the bench of the Supreme Court in 2010 I wanted to keep making a contribution to New Zealand. When Sir Owen Glenn approached me last year to chair the Inquiry he had set up I was presented with a real opportunity to make a difference in a major area of national concern, and therefore had no hesitation in accepting his invitation.

The Inquiry has the advantage of being truly independent of organs of the state. I can well understand why victims and people who work in or rely on the current system would be cautious about coming forward to a government inquiry to point out the failings of government agencies. Through the Glenn Inquiry, these people have been able to speak freely and in safety.

My career has been mainly in commercial litigation and until I read their accounts I had no appreciation of the scale of the problem from a victim's perspective. As a lawyer and former judge I am very concerned about their experiences in the Family Court and an adversarial justice system when there are imbalances of power and resources.

New Zealand leads the world in so many endeavours, yet in the family violence area we trail badly. However, I know from my 10 years as a member of the Waitangi Tribunal, which has helped educate the public on Treaty issues, just how much New Zealanders are capable of changing their attitudes when informed. The report underscores the importance of a coordinated response to family violence and abuse which involves education as prevention. Participants are right to say that all our children need to know what a healthy relationship looks like.

I am conscious that some voices do not come forward as strongly as others in the report, such as people in same-sex relationships, Pasifika, migrants, the disabled and women in gangs. More work is therefore required, but *The People's Report* is a giant start.

The Inquiry has more work in train toward producing the second stage of its work later this year, a Blueprint that will constitute a new model for addressing child abuse and domestic violence.

All this will count for little unless everyone is prepared to play a part and if those with the real influence and power do not listen. We hope this report creates debate, and welcome public feedback about solutions because nobody can claim to have all the answers.

I encourage people to exhort their community leaders and MPs, present and prospective, to take notice of the report. I challenge major political





parties to reach a cross-party accord that commits them to at least seriously consider the final outcome of this Inquiry, because a compelling message from the people's stories is that the system is failing too many children and families, and has to change.

I applaud the vision, determination and generosity of Sir Owen in taking up this cause in a way that has empowered some of our most wounded and vulnerable. I pay tribute to patron Dame Catherine Tizard for bringing wisdom and mana to an Inquiry where maintaining trust has been crucial to its work. And I thank the Inquiry Board and staff, particularly our chief executive Kirsten Rei, for their efforts and commitment in weathering many storms in order to complete *The People's Report*. My thanks also to the consultants who have assisted us.

Overall, I am left with an overriding impression of the courage of those who came forward to speak to the Inquiry. Their stories verify and reinforce the calls for change many frontline workers and service providers have been making for so long.

There has been enough talking; the time has come for action.

Bill Wilson QC  
Chairman  
The Glenn Inquiry



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## *of the participants*



*Hutia te rito o te harakeke*

*Kei whea te kōmako e kō?*

*Kī mai ki ahau*

*He aha te mea nui o te Ao?*

*Māku e kī atu,*


*He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.*

If the heart of the harakeke (flax plant) was removed, where will the bellbird sing?

If I was asked, “what was the most important thing in the world?”

I would be compelled to reply, “It is people, it is people, it is people!”





The Glenn Inquiry would not have been able to produce *The People's Report* without those who bravely came forward to share their stories, thoughts, and suggestions for addressing child abuse and domestic violence in New Zealand. For many this was the first time they had spoken about their experiences to anyone. We recognise the immense courage it took for those coming forward, be they victims, perpetrators or those working within government agencies, non-government agencies and community services. We also commend these people for their input that enabled the production of this report. In addition to providing invaluable insights into the experiences of those going through the system in their attempts to seek help and safety, people also articulated what things worked well, what things didn't work, and what an ideal system would be. For that we are eternally grateful. As the proverb on the facing page suggests, the voices, words and experiences of those people who came forward to speak to the Glenn Inquiry are of utmost importance for addressing child abuse and domestic violence.

*You have spoken,  
we have listened,  
and this report is  
the bellbird's song.*

# PREFACE



Our overwhelming impression from writing this report is the extent and enormity of the child abuse and domestic violence facing many living in Aotearoa New Zealand. The abuse and violence in people's lives is traumatic and has lifelong effects, even for those who appear to cope well or who are perceived as resilient.

Ideally services should help them to resolve the abuse and violence they live with. Those affected by child abuse and domestic violence not only have to navigate their daily lives in the hope of having a safe day, but they often have to navigate unfriendly people in a hostile and complex system in order to gain help. A system where people blame, do not readily share information, and make things difficult for victims must be changed.

It was exceedingly clear in people's stories that child abuse and domestic violence is normalised in our society. The problem with this normalisation of abuse and violence is that people living amid it generally "don't know what they don't know", and so the abuse and violence continues. Rather than being supported, people including children who ask for help are often blamed, persecuted, marginalised and isolated. Rather than blame or indifference, what is needed is help. Individuals and families need to be shown better ways of relating to others and learn how to be better parents.

It is the "small kindnesses" shown by some frontline workers, neighbours, friends and family members that make a big difference in people's lives. These kindnesses involve: believing victims, having a friendly attitude and approachable demeanour, sharing information readily, helping and not turning people away. It is these things that left long-lasting impressions on many people who talked to us. For many of them, it was the first time someone had been kind to them without expecting something in return.

In standing up to their perpetrators, many victims hoped to reclaim their mana and sense of self. However, for many, their experiences of the system further disempowered them and resulted in losing whatever mana they may have had left. Thus, seeking help can sometimes be worse for people than putting up with the violence and abuse.

The whole issue of family violence and abuse is complex and multi-dimensional. We found that whole families are silenced when violence is present in the lives of people they love. They often do not know what to do for fear of being ostracised if they act and speak out. Then they are accused of condoning the abuse when they do nothing.

Many family members become almost paralysed with fear at the thought of challenging perpetrators' behaviour. To challenge means to often stand alone, and many do not want to be ostracised from the people they love. It's no exaggeration to observe that domestic violence and abuse seems to sew family members' lips, eyes and ears shut, and turns them to stone.

Another complexity is that many abusers appear to be "nice" people, but are also manipulative, controlling and cruel. This façade can make a victim's endeavour to seek help, particularly for their children, an enormous mountain to climb. Victims need to be listened to, and negatively labelling them needs to stop.

It also needs to be said that the victim-perpetrator categorisation is somewhat arbitrary. Many perpetrators were once victims themselves – victims who never had their trauma addressed. This needs to be factored into any redesign of the system.

It is crucial that children and young people in particular have the right support to address the traumas they have experienced and to find new



ways of coping and being safe. To ignore their experiences is to continue the intergenerational child abuse and domestic violence that currently exists.

Undoubtedly, child abuse and domestic violence creates deep wounds in those affected and their family members. Recovering from the trauma of child abuse and domestic violence is a long-term endeavour that requires long-term solutions, for instance, counselling, parenting education and mentoring, and family interventions.

It is our hope that the people of New Zealand will respectfully read *The People's Report* and recognise the enormous contribution people have made so we can better understand child abuse and domestic violence from an "inside" view. This Report highlights the importance of nurturing children, their mothers, fathers and the families they live within.

New Zealand needs strong, constructive people to grow our next generations. The Report contains many insights into how, as a society, we can create a safer New Zealand for women, children and families. The people who came forward did so with the hope that some good would come from their experiences with abuse and violence, and that real change would happen to make life better for others, especially their children and grandchildren.

Denise Wilson and Melinda Webber  
May 2014



# EXECUTIVE

## summary

Prompted by New Zealand's appalling child abuse and domestic violence statistics, Sir Owen Glenn funded an independent inquiry to answer the question, *if New Zealand was leading the world in addressing child abuse and domestic violence, what would that look like?*

In 2013, the Glenn Inquiry into child abuse and domestic violence provided the people of New Zealand with an opportunity to share their views on how this problem could be addressed. The independent nature of this Inquiry attracted victims, perpetrators and frontline workers to come forward and talk about their experiences of child abuse and/or domestic violence, what's working well, what's not working well, and how things could be improved. It gave a voice to people who were previously silenced and often invisible. Those who came forward chose to either talk face-to-face with Inquiry panel members, via Skype, or submit their contribution online. For many people, the Glenn Inquiry provided them with their first opportunity to tell their stories and share their views on how things could be different.

### A Safe and Respectful Process

It was fundamental to the Glenn Inquiry that those who came forward were respected, and their confidentiality and identity protected. Ethical approval was obtained, and processes were set up to optimise people's safety. All names and other identifying information were removed from information collected, and all de-identified files were encrypted and stored on password-protected computers' hard drives. Those who talked to the Glenn Inquiry panels were supported and anyone who became distressed and re-traumatised as a result of telling their story was referred to relevant and specialist agencies.

Panel interviews were held throughout New Zealand in 16 locations. By the completion of the process, the Inquiry had heard from around 500 people, of which 113 were frontline workers. Fifty people

provided online submissions. Face-to-face or Skype interviews usually lasted between 30 to 45 minutes.

### Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Happens Everywhere

A key insight of those who spoke to us was that child abuse and domestic violence happens across all sectors of New Zealand society, including middle-to-upper class Pākehā homes. It generally occurs within the context of wider family violence, and it is not unusual for perpetrators to have also been victims as children. For many families, child abuse and domestic violence are intergenerational patterns of behaviour, which have been so normalised they become an acceptable way of interacting with others and dealing with problems.

Child abuse and domestic violence is hidden behind a cloak of silence and secrecy. It takes many forms and is mostly a combination of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and/or financial abuse with lifelong consequences. People told us that abuse and violence were maintained by societal attitudes and acceptance of violence, New Zealand's binge drinking culture, and a system that generally does not work.

### Key Insights from Respondents

People told the Glenn Inquiry that:

- child abuse affects both boys and girls, while domestic violence mostly affects women. However, it is not unusual for both child abuse and domestic violence to occur within wider abuse and violence in a family. For instance, between siblings and child-to-mother violence.
- domestic violence is a form of child abuse, even if children are not being directly abused.



- child abuse and domestic violence continues because of silence, secrecy, covering up and isolation of victims. For many, abuse and violence was a “normal” part of everyday life. Unless this normalisation was disrupted in some way (for instance, by discovering it does not happen to all families or by someone bringing it to their attention), it was often carried on to the next generation. Family members and friends could not always be relied on to help those affected by abuse and violence.
- asking for help is fraught. It is accompanied by stigma, humiliation and fear of further abuse, re-traumatisation and rejection. Attempting to disclose abuse and violence means risking people ridiculing and not believing them.
- children rely on adults believing them and responding to signs of abuse, but people reported that generally obvious signs of abuse as children were ignored.
- the impacts of living in abusive, violent and unstable homes varied from person to person, but were significant and often lifelong for almost every person. Impacts included disruption to relationships, social and health problems (physical, emotional and psychological) and developmental delays in learning.
- many of those abused as children went on to be victims and/or perpetrators in their adult lives.
- leaving or escaping abusive or violent relationships was complex and difficult. Most victims did not have “freedom” of choice. Their abusers’ actions and threats prevented victims feeling sufficiently empowered to make a decision to walk out the door.

## What’s Working Well

People who came forward said that some aspects of the current system were working well.

We were told inter-agency collaboration focusing on improving the lives of children and families works well. Such collaboration requires all relevant organisations and agencies to work together for the benefit of the family. This involves information-sharing and strategies that engage all stakeholders, including family members and community-based organisations.

We were also told there were individuals within services and organisations who were making a very valuable contribution. These people were described as genuine, caring, non-judgmental, compassionate, empathetic, and willing to listen, respond and take action. For instance,

- teachers interested in the wellbeing of children and their lives outside of school were seen as crucial in getting support for those affected by child abuse and neglect. Such teachers were noted to believe children’s disclosures of abuse and domestic violence at home, and responded sensitively and confidentially. People said that education about these issues in schools was important as they alert children that their abuse and violence is not normal.
- health providers can be helpful as victims generally seek health care related to abuse routinely. Health providers are in a key position to detect child abuse and domestic violence, support victims and refer them to appropriate services for further help.
- the Police were noted to have improved in their attitudes and responsiveness in recent times.





## What's Not Working Well

Most people told the Inquiry that New Zealand's current system for addressing child abuse and domestic violence is generally not working. Sometimes the things that were meant to help didn't – they just made it worse. People talked extensively about the amount of time they spent navigating the ins and outs of 'the system', making it difficult to become, or stay, safe which left little time for 'healing'. Key aspects of the system that people said are not working well include:

- seeking help is exceptionally difficult for victims, and can force them to remain in or return to a violent relationship. If they do manage to leave, they are often faced with increased risk to their safety, as well as a life of poverty and desperation.
- people, especially victims, are faced by frontline workers and people around them whose attitudes and behaviours expose them to further abuse and trauma. Victims are generally not believed, and perpetrators' manipulative behaviours mean that they remain unaccountable for their abuse and violence.
- inter-agency collaboration, communication and information-sharing were key areas that government, non-government and community services and agencies need to improve.
- those affected by child abuse and domestic violence had no genuine right of redress, as their complaints and questions about the quality of the services they received often went unheard or unaddressed.
- the court system and those working within it (judges, lawyers and psychologists) are part of a system that is dysfunctional and mostly not working. Unprofessional behaviour, poor communication and documentation, confrontational court processes, and protection orders that are not being enforced are examples of areas where the courts are not performing well.
- insensitive and judgmental staff, poor communication and documentation, and lack of collaboration with other agencies and community organisations were evident in Child Youth and Family and Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) practices.
- New Zealand's public, professionals and frontline workers generally lack knowledge about child abuse and domestic violence.
- the majority of people expressed concern about New Zealand's binge drinking culture and its contribution to child abuse and domestic violence.

Victims need help in many forms, including financial assistance, housing, and long-term counselling. They also need adequately resourced services, and professionals who understand the complexity of child abuse and domestic violence.

## Doing Things Differently

There is a need for a fresh approach that moves beyond labels, theories and gendered approaches. Doing things differently means recognising and understanding that child abuse frequently goes hand-in-hand with domestic violence. We were told that it involves designing a long-term national strategy that is focused on multi-level and multi-system change and development, facilitated by government. The welfare of victims and their families must be at the centre of the strategy which would involve social, community and economic development, as well as attitudinal and cultural change. An effective national strategy would:

- adopt a zero tolerance to child abuse and domestic violence, making it everyone's concern
- be child-focused and promote and strengthen family relationships
- protect those affected
- prevent abuse and violence
- restore relationships and families for the benefit of children, and
- overhaul systems and services, especially the justice and legal systems.





## Taking Action

Interviewees strongly emphasised the need to focus on preventing violence by monitoring, tracking and following up on reports of violence. They also emphasised the need for ongoing research to identify factors that increase or decrease the risk for violence.

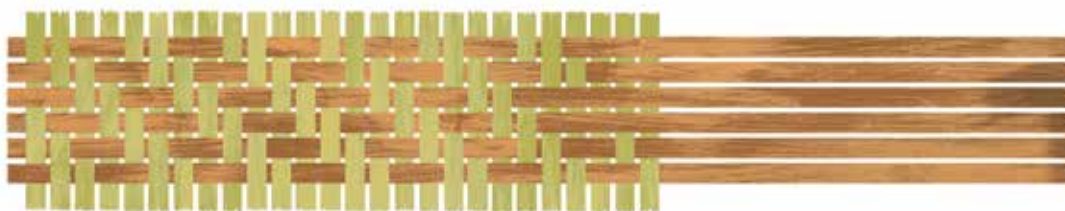
The acronym **RESPECT** identifies seven key issues that need attention by government agencies and services, non-government organisations and other community-based providers involved with families, as well as domestic and sexual violence specialists. Addressing these areas would help New Zealand better meet the needs of those impacted by child abuse and domestic violence:

- Refining documentation to eliminate inaccuracies and address fragmentation
- Early intervention
- Skilled workforce – it only takes “one champion” to make a difference
- Prevention via education, especially for children, to interrupt the cycle of violence
- Equitable approaches – helping one, helping all
- Community action to intervene
- Tying it all together – inter-agency collaboration.

## Where To From Here?

*The People's Report* provides an in-depth examination of the effects of child abuse and domestic violence on individuals and their families. There is still a need for further work to better understand, for example, the experiences and realities of those affected by child abuse and domestic violence who also have disabilities, are Pacific or Asian, are associated with gangs, or are in same-sex relationships.

However *The People's Report* provides a solid foundation for improving our understanding of the realities of child abuse and domestic violence. Child abuse and domestic violence is complex and endemic in our families and society, and there is no simple solution. This Report provides sign-posts and guidance for those working with children and adults who are at risk of, or are suffering, child abuse and domestic violence. If New Zealand is to reduce its shocking child abuse and domestic violence statistics, we can no longer turn away from those people and families whose lives are blighted by its long-term and harmful effects.



# INTRODUCTION



*“I’m not very tactful. I don’t wrap things up in cotton wool. And just being able to role model to them [people living with child abuse and domestic violence] that there is nothing wrong with telling someone, “The reason I don’t leave is because every time I leave he drags me back and rapes me for three days straight.” It’s vital for people to actually know the reality of living in, what I call, intimate terrorism. The tactics of domestic violence are no different from the Taliban, or from Al Qaeda. The difference is they’re doing it on mass populations. But the tactics are exactly the same: deprivation, sensory deprivation, repetition, subliminal messaging, and shock tactics. You can manipulate someone’s mind while they’re in shock, beat the shit out of them and you can get them to agree to anything. We know that SAS and the Special Forces are all trained to resist that, to know the breakdown that’s going on for you. And when you’re held captive by terrorists, they’ve got a much tighter timeframe. It’s no different from a woman that is locked down, imprisoned in her own home. You can break down anybody.”*

For a small country, Aotearoa New Zealand has an appallingly high rate of child abuse and domestic violence. For many people child abuse and domestic violence has lifelong consequences, and for some, ends in death. The cost associated with child abuse and domestic violence is not just financial, but includes long-term effects on people’s and families’ spiritual, physical and mental health, and in some cases, entire communities. The effect of child abuse and domestic violence impact the ability of many people to live full and useful lives, and disrupts family and community functioning. With the generous support of Sir Owen Glenn, the Glenn Inquiry asked, *If New Zealand was leading the world in addressing child abuse and domestic violence, what*

*would that look like?* To answer this question, in 2013 the people of New Zealand were invited to share their experiences, hopes, dreams, and ideas about what would enable better responses to child abuse and domestic violence.

This is *The People’s Report* – the first report to be informed by those people affected by child abuse and domestic violence. It is not an academic interpretation; rather it records the stories, hopes, dreams and ideas shared by a wide variety of people who came forward to talk to us about child abuse and domestic violence. Participants included women and men who grew up living with child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse and/or domestic violence; victims and perpetrators of domestic violence; those working at the frontline with child abuse and domestic violence; and those interested in addressing child abuse and domestic violence here in New Zealand.

Their stories provided valuable insights that will help New Zealanders understand the difficulties of “fixing” child abuse and domestic violence problems in our country. They also provide direction about how to make New Zealand a safer place for our children to grow up in. The stories in this Report provide direction and insights into how we can make the systems and services already in place more responsive and effective.

The Glenn Inquiry is humbled by the courage and trust that it took for many people to come forward and either talk with the panels or submit their contribution online, especially as many have been treated poorly in the current ‘system’. Respondents talked about their negative experiences (for example, being portrayed as ‘crazy’, ‘emotional’ and ‘aggressive’) along with the learning that arose from these experiences. We have ensured their voices are to the fore throughout this report by including quotes<sup>1</sup> which illustrate key themes arising from their collective stories.

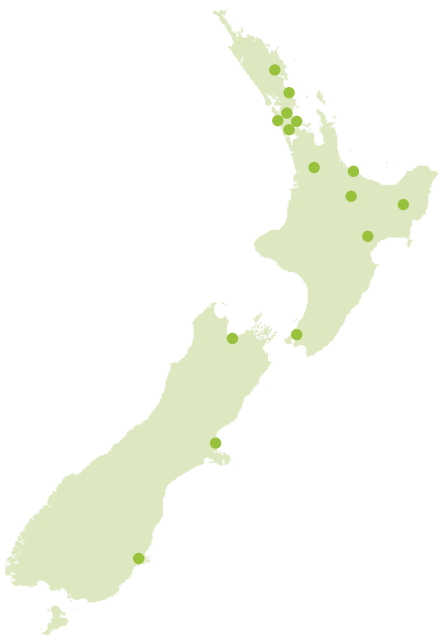
1 The quotes presented in this report have been edited to remove superfluous expressions, words and repetition to improve their readability. However, the intent and content of people’s messages has been left intact to ensure each quote is an accurate portrayal of the people’s stories.



## Coming Forward to Tell Their Story

*[The Inquiry] is independent which means that we have an independent voice for once, to speak for us. Take our stories and do something constructive and positive with them that the government can stand up and see that it's not against Labour, it's not against National, it's the people who want something done to help them. That's why I'm so adamant to speak out and have someone hear my voice. Victims don't have a voice. We the victims rarely have a voice. We've got one for the first time now, there's someone independent who has actually taken the heart to listen.*

The Glenn Inquiry talked to approximately 500 people (mostly by meeting face-to-face with the panels, although some were interviewed by Skype), and received 50 online submissions. Panel interviews were conducted in Whangarei, Rodney, North Shore, Central Auckland, South Auckland, West Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Rotorua,



Gisborne, Napier, Lower Hutt, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin. The majority of people who had lived with child abuse and domestic violence were women (84%). We heard from people between the ages of 16 and 80 years, and while most people coming forward identified as New Zealand Pākehā/European, a quarter of those who came forward identified as Māori. We also heard from people who were immigrants affected by violence abroad and/or in New Zealand, and who had experiences of other systems. Similarly, 80% of the frontline workers who came forward were women, although 36% identified as Māori and 44% as New Zealand Pākehā/European. Appendix 2 contains more detail on those who came forward.

A wide range of people (victims, perpetrators, those working in the area, and the public) came forward. The Inquiry's independence from political and "professional" influences, along with the opportunity to talk to someone face-to-face, encouraged them to come forward and talk about their experiences and thoughts.

For many, it was the first time they had talked to anyone about their experiences of child abuse and/or domestic violence. It gave them the opportunity to express their concerns, anger, and importantly their hopes for the future. Often people shared their experiences knowing that their own situations and the after-effects of the abuse and violence they had lived with could never be "fixed" or resolved for them. They came forward in the hope that family life would be better for their children and grandchildren, and for others.

*When I heard about the inquiry, I thought well maybe some good can come of this. This happened to me, but maybe something positive can happen out of it.*





The Inquiry heard stories from victims of both child abuse and domestic violence, and perpetrators. Many had lived with long-term abuse and violence that affected their physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. For many people, the abuse and violence was passed on from previous generations and on to their children’s generation. Importantly, a number of women and adults came forward who had been abused as children because they wanted it known that child abuse and domestic violence was not just a “poor” or “Māori” problem. They described themselves as white, upper-to -middle class and spoke of their struggles to become free of the abuse and violence they lived with.

We also heard from adults who, as children, desperately hoped that other family members, friends, neighbours and teachers would ask them about their bruises and what was happening in their homes. In most cases this did not happen.

We also heard from people who had thought that the abuse and violence they lived with on a daily basis was normal. They had not lived in families where members treated each other in warm, caring, loving and non-violent ways – they had no positive role models for this.

Finally we heard from a wide range of people working in the areas of child abuse and domestic violence: those working for government agencies and non-government organisations, community providers, interested groups, professionals, policy-makers, community workers, advocates, and support people. They too shared their experiences and reflections for change so that New Zealand might one day lead the world in addressing child abuse and domestic violence.

### Participants’ Hopes and Dreams

Those who came forward to talk to the Glenn Inquiry – victims, perpetrators, family members and frontline workers<sup>2</sup> – all did so with a hope for change, especially for their children and their grandchildren.



They wanted to be part of the solution to child abuse and domestic violence, believing that this is a problem that needs to be talked about by all New Zealanders, rather than “swept under the carpet”. Many believed this was the current strategy used to address child abuse and domestic violence.

Victims expressed major concern that currently in New Zealand it remains both acceptable and normal for children to grow up in abusive and violent environments. Many believed that this

2 In The People’s Report we use the term **frontline workers** inclusively to refer to all those who work with people and their families affected by child abuse and domestic violence. This includes, therefore, people working in government departments, non-government organisations and community services and community workers.





acceptance ensured the cycle of violence would be repeated into the next generation. It was observed as ironic that New Zealand is seen as a good place to bring up children but child abuse and domestic violence are an everyday occurrence.

## A Respectful Process

Ethical approval was obtained<sup>3</sup> for the second round of panel interviews held in late 2013 – early 2014, and informed consent obtained from all those participating. People’s safety, security and confidentiality were a key priority, and the conduct of the Inquiry was guided by a protocol manual. Each person coming forward needed to be living violence-free and no longer in a situation whereby participating would endanger their lives or their children or other family members. If this was the situation, people were provided with sensitive explanations as to why they could not meet with a panel. Recognising that people could be distressed or re-traumatised from telling their story, the Glenn Inquiry ensured experienced support people were available following the interviews and later followed-up to determine if they needed support. People were also given the Glenn Inquiry 0800 number if they needed to talk prior to this.

## A Variety of Voices

The Glenn Inquiry received extensive, rich and valuable information from those coming forward to talk to the various panels. Many people provided their input via Skype interviews or by online submissions. This process also involved cross-checking stories with the themes identified. *The People’s Report* was then peer-reviewed by three people who were involved in the panel interviews. People’s stories were transcribed and analysed to help us identify common themes emerging. People’s recorded stories and transcripts were stored in encrypted files on password-protected computers.

The key themes in this Report reflect what people told us; many quotes have been included to capture their voices and illustrate themes. We removed all identifying features to protect people’s anonymity and confidentiality. *The People’s Report* is greatly enriched by the diversity in the experiences and backgrounds of the people who participated.

## Use of Terms

In this report we refer to “victim” and “perpetrator”, language the people who talked to the Glenn Inquiry used.

The Inquiry recognises the risks associated with these terms. They imply separate roles in child abuse and domestic violence, yet the reality is that many people are both victims and perpetrators. The Glenn Inquiry recognises that within the context of domestic violence there are perpetrators of violence who as children were victims of child abuse and/or lived in homes where domestic violence was happening.

The terms “victim” and “perpetrator” as used in *The People’s Report* convey commonly understood positions people have in abusive and violent relationships. The term “domestic violence” is also frequently used in this report. However, people’s stories indicate that for many their violence occurs within a broader context than just partner violence. It can rightly be argued that family violence would be more appropriate terminology. The Glenn Inquiry question was originally framed within the contexts of child abuse and domestic violence because of the predominately gendered nature of domestic violence. Therefore, the term “domestic violence” was retained.

*The People’s Report* ends victims’, perpetrators’ and frontline workers’ silence and invisibility on issues associated with child abuse and domestic violence. It gives them a powerful voice in identifying how the current system can be improved.

3 Ethical approval was obtained from the Health and Disability Ethics Committee (13/CEN/160).





We go forward, honouring the stories of those who have come forward by describing their experiences of abuse and violence and its impact on their lives. This is then followed by presenting what is currently working well and what is not working well. Finally we present people's thoughts and suggestions for an ideal system, and ways of taking action.

# SECTION 1

*Honouring  
their stories,  
their lives*



# SECTION 1:

## Honouring their stories, their lives

*People, us as a society, need to understand that by the time it's got physical, there have been months of systematic psychological breakdown – months and months of it. No abuser knocks their partner out on the first date, because you don't get a second one.*

People's stories highlighted how child abuse and domestic violence are complex webs that often begin subtly whereby perpetrators draw their victims in, and gradually entrap them over time using tactics of coercion (such as manipulation, intimidation and threats) and control (such as restricting freedom and isolating friends and family). Silence and secrets hide the reality for those trapped and life becomes a growing nightmare for most victims as they struggle for freedom and safety. This cloak of silence is maintained by threats of further harm to victim and their loved ones including children, family members, and in some cases, pets. Silence ensures the continuation of child abuse and domestic violence – the signs of abuse and violence and pleas for help often go unheard or are ignored by family, friends, colleagues, and those working in the various services they come into contact with.

This section of *The People's Report* begins by talking about children, the most vulnerable family members living within violent homes.



### Children in Violent Homes

*“The emotional abuse leaves scars for life on a child. ...the belittling, shame and humiliation, and people doing and saying to the child: “you're worthless”, “you're bad”, “you're a mistake”, yelling at them, threatening them, bullying them, ignoring them for a punishment, the silent treatment, they won't talk, no hugs, no kisses, no affection, neglect, emotional abuse, calling them stupid. As for me, I was the devil's daughter and I'll go to hell. Guilt, that's what comes onto the child, and shame.”*

Child abuse has serious long-term harmful effects that stay with children into their adulthood. A lesser understood form of child abuse is children living in the middle of the violence that goes on between parents, adults, and within their communities. We heard from many people that children are not passive observers or just witnesses of the violence that goes on between their parents and other adults living in their homes. The effects of domestic abuse on children in the home are very real, serious and long-term. One victim of domestic violence told the Glenn Inquiry,

*At the time you don't think your children are taking anything on board because they're quite young. They actually do and I'm amazed, I'm blown away with what comes out. My daughter was telling me that she remembered, “Dad picked up the poker and you ran out”.*

Another person talked about the seeming invisibility children have when domestic violence is happening with their parents.



*My mum she's like, "I'm the victim, your father's the perpetrator." Yet we were the victims, "You didn't protect us, you didn't take us out of that, you let us sit there and watch you scrap."*

Abuse and violence for children and young people mostly occurred in their family homes, their father's home during custody or access visits, and/or within their wider family or Child Youth and Family care. Without doubt domestic violence is a form of child abuse. The Inquiry heard from people that domestic violence affected them as children:

- physically
- psychologically
- emotionally and
- spiritually.

Some people also spoke about the trauma of being separated from their siblings. Undeniably, domestic violence and child abuse disrupts children's childhood and youth, particularly when they were sent to live with relatives or carers or shifted from place to place. The following person described life-long effects of child abuse.

*There needs to be more support. Not everybody has a family, and from what I know of other people that have been abused in childhood, it is ongoing, it is the rest of their life, it is the rest of my life. I will die because of it. But we tend to isolate ourselves. So it's got to be good support, it's got to be user-friendly support. We are people. We are hurt and damaged people and we're fragile, we might be strong, we might be tough, but we are fragile.*

Many people who spoke to the Glenn Inquiry had experienced abuse and neglect as children, often for their entire childhood and youth. Their stories highlight the importance of taking child abuse seriously, especially within the context of domestic violence. Children rely on adults, particularly their mothers and teachers, to protect and care for them satisfactorily. But this often did not happen. One mother's reflection shows how her method of coping with domestic violence meant she did not protect her son.

*My son, I just kept quiet even though he's screaming, because, what's the point? And I think that's the dangerous part when women start to be quiet. It is because that's when they will actually let go of being a mother or protecting the children, because they just lose the hope and also the fighting spirit to actually keep fighting.*

While people talked of their "responsibility" for their mothers when they were children, they also talked of paradoxically blaming their mothers for not protecting them.

*"But everyone just thinks, oh you're making it up. It's hearsay. This is a bitter, resentful mother. My daughter knows I'm not like that, she knows I become angry and I'm trying to cope with that, but she's very angry now because she's now starting to blame me for taking her up there in the first place."*

People also talked to the Glenn Inquiry about not being cared for as a child – being left behind in dangerous situations, being taken suddenly to another location, no one asking them how they were, being forced to spend time with a parent they felt unsafe with or who abused them. They were exposed to yelling, drunkenness, physical assault and were caught up in their parents' ongoing problems, anger and distress when they were handed over from one parent to the other.

Often people spoke about one parent talking negatively of another parent and of no one protecting them. In other cases, children talked of their mother or father making excuses for their ex-partners' drunken, violent or abusive behaviour, unsuccessfully.

Children and young people became the keepers of "family secrets" about their parents' abuse and violence, especially as telling someone about what they were living with often had serious consequences. One person described their approach to concealing their family secrets.

*You don't go and tell tales. But you just say, "Well something's happened and I feel upset about it." And just give them [teachers] something to work with.*

For children in these situations, uncertainty was a feature of their lives – the sudden departures from home, only to end up sleeping on someone else's floor; being taken by a parent or relatives only to be returned back to their home; or being embarrassed and frightened when their parents had public fights. People also told us that they tried to stop their parents fighting by coming between them but were then hit themselves. Many talked about their sense of responsibility for protecting their mother and a sibling(s), reporting that they never left their mothers alone or they waited outside of closed doors to make sure their mother was alright. The consequences of all this family upheaval was devastating. In addition to experiencing traumatic memories and nightmares, they became frightened, upset and angry children and young people who in time began to "shut down".

For some people, violence was a normal feature of growing up within their family, wider family and community, and for others it continued after their parents' separation. Mandated custody visits, people told the Inquiry, extended the occurrence of abuse and violence between their parents. One mother explained the impact on her children this way.

*The sad thing is, if the court had taken the domestic violence seriously from day one, there were things that could've been put in place to make the contact with the kids and their dad safe and healthy. They could've actually had a healthy relationship. But instead, they hate him now, they really hate him. They shouldn't feel that way about their father, even if he was abusive towards me.*

Also, shared custody was often a problem. Sometimes courts required it even when a child had asked not to stay with a particular parent.

The Inquiry was told that often victims (generally their mother) lacked the options or resources to escape and/or remove their children from a violent home environment. Many people who lived with child abuse or within homes where there was domestic violence said that they often wondered why family members, teachers or neighbours never asked if they were okay. It's vital, they said, that children have someone to talk to, away from their parents. They also need counselling to help them cope with the horror story that their lives had become, and to develop new ways of coping and behaving so they do not repeat their parents' behaviours as adults.

*"It was only at that point where he sat down and said to me, "What do you think the effects on that young child would have been to witness this?" Even, in my mind, I thought for a child under two no effect, but listening to him was the first point I started to say, actually maybe I did something wrong."*

Importantly, a few people said their childhood experiences helped them to break the cycle of violence and motivated them to become non-violent adults.

The abuse of children can take many forms. People spoke about the neglect of children, whether it was a lack of or poor quality food, dirty clothing, poor hygiene, untreated medical ailments (such as scabies, lice or chest infections), being left home alone or shut in a room, and being ignored.

*She had a chest infection, she had the scabies again, or was it school sores. The family, there are about 11 living in a 3-bedroom home, and most of them were living in the lounge.*

Fathers living in the child's home were reported to neglect not only their partner but also their children. A number of people who talked to the Glenn Inquiry also referred to being neglected by their father when they were on a custody visit. One woman talked about her children being neglected when in their father's care as a way of "getting" to her.

*"The kids have gone seven days without a shower when they're with their dad. And for a 13-year old girl going through her menstrual cycle and stuff that's disgraceful. It's neglect, but it's about getting at me too. Because if he hurts the kids he hurts me, he knows that. Anything he can do to upset me."*

Children can be neglected by either or both parents. Some people talked about both parents neglecting children, and others talked about their mothers neglecting them. The reasons for neglect varied from "getting at" a partner or an ex-partner to making or saving money, to parents being too busy or doing other things (for instance, choosing to go to the pub, drink alcohol, watching TV or going to a party), to mothers having postnatal depression and being left with the children. Neglect often goes unnoticed until children become "smelly", have lice or are simply noticed to be "dirty", although, as the following teacher observed, some children learn to look after themselves and cover up their neglect.

*"Often neglect, the only way it comes up is when a child's not looking after themselves and they smell, or they've got head lice that are visible and nothing's being done about it, or their clothes are filthy. That's what alerts a teacher that there's something wrong. Often if the kids look after themselves, their self-management skills are good, which they learn, and then the neglect isn't even brought to light. I can think of one little girl who was very good at concealing the fact that she didn't have a lunch."*

There can be a number of reasons why abuse is kept secret. Children can be ashamed and embarrassed, or sometimes they did not even realise that their experiences were not "normal". Other times children stay silent in response to their abuser's psychological abuse and the threats they make – people spoke about it not being unusual for children's abusers to threaten the lives of a child's parents or siblings if they told anyone about the abuse. Such threats created a sort of paralysis, preventing them from acting.

Another factor contributing to secrecy is that sometimes children became confused about whether what was happening to them was right or wrong.

*So there was ongoing grooming too, for me to be tolerant of behaviour that nobody should be tolerant of. So there was touching going on when the three of us [mother, father, infant son] were in bed together, and it was exhausting trying to keep track of what was right and wrong, and I was exhausted anyway.*

Many children and young people were clear about what didn't feel good, yet tragically when they summoned the courage to disclose abuse they were sometimes not believed.

*What people don't realise, the child is not naughty, the child is only trying to get attention and trying to get help. The first thing that's got to happen is that the adults have got to believe the child.*

Unsurprisingly, given all these factors, many who survived child abuse talked about the real need for adults to speak up for them. They also emphasised the need for education to start very early in schools to help children and young people recognise that the abuse and violence happening to them was neither right nor normal.

Without doubt, children are vulnerable and significantly impacted by child abuse and domestic violence in some way, shape or form that lives on in them into their adulthood. Children need to be made visible within the context of domestic violence, and the impacts on them emotionally, psychologically and socially recognised. The Glenn Inquiry overwhelmingly heard that children in situations of domestic violence become “broken”, and for many, they went on to become broken adults.

### Types of Abuse and Violence

*“I became very aware of systems and norms and dysfunctional families and what they look like, what's likely to happen, and precursors to crime and all that, kids that are violent towards animals and all that. There's so much research that's gone on. So one of the things that would've helped is if somebody had recognised that we were from a dysfunctional family...”*

Child abuse and domestic violence occurs in multiple forms, with individuals and families experiencing and responding to it in various ways. Its occurrence varies from regular daily or weekly abuse and violence through to being totally

unpredictable. The longer child abuse and domestic violence goes on, the more likely it is to increase in frequency and become more harmful.

Some people talked to the Glenn Inquiry about other abuse and violence occurring within families, such as sibling violence and child-to-mother violence. People said that, on the whole, child abuse and domestic violence occurred in combinations of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, along with other forms such as financial abuse.

Child-parent relationships in these situations were characterised by a lack of emotional wellbeing, poor communication, suboptimal parenting skills (for example, using overly strict or inappropriate discipline), and generally what can only be described as unhealthy relationships with other family members. In addition to young (and not so young) families being at risk of child abuse and domestic violence when they had employment and/or financial difficulties, many families were also coping with mental health issues, low self-esteem and/or identity issues resulting from a lifetime of inappropriate behaviours.

People also talked about undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues (for instance, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression, and personality disorders) and behavioural issues (such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)) increasing the susceptibility for people to drift towards abusive and violent relationships.

Victims are often described, for example, as “broken as a person”, “mad”, and “crazy” by perpetrators, their families and frontline workers. Perpetrators were described as “a brute”, “psychopathic”, and “a drunkard”. Moreover, while victims were “fighting” and struggled to be heard and believed, perpetrators generally denied and avoided being

responsible and accountable for the mayhem that they caused. Perpetrators' manipulation serves to isolate victims from family and friends and any other support networks they may have, and makes victims' efforts to be heard difficult.

In many cases people told the Glenn Inquiry that domestic violence began subtly and gradually escalated.

*“I became pregnant quite soon after meeting my partner. He was older than I was, and we were both interested in having a child. We got pregnant very quickly on purpose, and as soon as that happened I realised that he was quite possessive and controlling, which I had mistaken for ‘blokeyness’. I found myself tolerating his differences, but actually I was being tolerant of something that was scary for me. After my son was born it became really clear that his father was becoming very difficult for me. He was very jealous of the baby and engaging in lots of passive-aggressive behaviour. Even during the birth he sulked and refused to help me, things like this. I was not able to walk after the birth and he would bring me a drink but put it out of my reach. Anything I ever said that I didn't like him doing he would do more of it. So it was a very passive-aggressive, quite cruel stuff. I was sleep deprived, he woke me up. He felt sexually deprived and his sexuality became overbearing. He was watching porn, and I kept catching him. Well I caught him masturbating, so his sexuality was really prevalent in the household. At some point in my son's first year I realised that the sexuality was being directed towards the baby, or the baby was being touched inappropriately. At the same time there was ongoing behaviour, both subtle and overt to wind me up and to make me feel crazy about what I was seeing and what I was experiencing – to do with sexuality between me and the father, and sexuality between the father and the son – what was really right and what wasn't.”*

For children, domestic violence exposes them to various forms of abuse, but because they rely on adults to care and nurture them they may also experience physical and emotional neglect, particularly when living in a home with domestic violence when it impacts their mother's ability to function. The following man talks about the impact of living with sexual and psychological abuse.

*When you get sexually abused, it's not the abuse that really gets you; it's the mentalness, the stuff in your mind, the mental manipulations. With the amount of mental manipulation, and that's probably one of the worst things about sexual abuse. The act in most, or some cases, you get over the act, it's only a sexual act. And you sort of can get over it, it's the mental side of it you can never get over. Something's been taken that you can't replace. You know, it's a bit like having a family heirloom and it gets robbed out of your house. Insurance can pay and you get a new one but it's not the same, you can't get it back. And that's like life. My life's not the same. I can only try and try to be the person I am now by hard work, whereas other people just live. I get really tired of living sometimes.*

A woman talking to the Glenn Inquiry described how an environment of physical and sexual violence set her up for a life of confusion and vulnerability that altered the way in which she viewed life.

*“I guess what I'd say about my life is that it was characterised by violence since I was very young – physical violence and sexual violence. And that continued into my teenage years, so I have quite a long period of being in that mind-set. And I kind of think of that as being like living in a world where everything that you know about right and wrong as a child is ignored,*

because you do perceive that. You know what truth is. You know what, when people are doing good and people are doing bad. And we give that responsibility to children very young. You do the right thing. Don't lie. Don't lie. So I think that the effect of living in an environment where everybody is living a lie and for you as a child, how much, how deeply I think that that confuses you and makes you very vulnerable, because you no longer have a level playing field in life. So for me I think that just the impact of just living alone in that, or living in that situation has made my whole perception of life askew since that time onwards. I can't trust what people are saying because it may not actually be correct. Or their intention of what they're saying is different. So I think, from having witnessed what that does, both in myself and in my siblings, I think it's a crucial point to understand about why children are not able to speak up. Why are they silenced? Why are they not able to say that this is happening to me and it's wrong?"

A number of people coming forward to the Glenn Inquiry wanted it known that abuse and violence was occurring across all sectors of society, not just in certain sections as the media would have New Zealanders believe. Victims and perpetrators were equally likely to come from "good" neighbourhoods, hold "good" jobs and be "respectable" people within the community but it goes unrecognised, as this experienced Police officer noted.

*"We lump everybody in the same boat. And we don't look at it individually. And where we see as a community, domestic violence occurs in the low socio-economic scale, [but] there is so much in the middle to high range, which is going unnoticed. ... When you go to the likes of her ex who has got a good job, he's got a nice house, he's got a nice car, and you go into that house and it's like, "Oh really, are we sure that domestic violence would be in here?" And we start doubting ourselves especially if somebody*

*is a very good talker, very manipulative, as these people are. Domestic violence is at this level – you lose your rag, bang and it's over and done with. It seems to me that the domestic violence that is ongoing, is trying to control somebody."*

As will be mentioned in other parts of *The People's Report*, alcohol and drugs play a big part in perpetuating child abuse and domestic violence. Alcohol was seen as a contributing factor to the ongoing neglect of children. Some people who talked to the Glenn Inquiry spoke about the entrenched alcohol culture that exists in New Zealand, as the following person explains.

*I don't know how we're going to change that culture. I don't know how we're going to. Because it's entrenched, I mean, young people today now, you just see them don't you? They just want to get smashed.*

Not only do alcohol and drug (including prescription drugs) contribute to violent behaviours, they are used to control victims and as a way to survive the abuse and violence, a way of avoiding having to deal with it. A wide range of stressful situations contribute to occurrences of abuse and violence. These are related to mental health and behavioural issues, poor self-esteem and identity issues, alcohol and drugs, dealing with a partner's addiction, financial and employment difficulties, and trying to manage a young family with other everyday commitments.

### Physical Violence

The Glenn Inquiry heard from people that physical violence starts off small with acts like pushing and pulling hair, slowly escalating over time with violence becoming more intentional, happening more frequently and associated with more acts involving humiliation. It was not unusual for violence to worsen when a woman became pregnant or after she had a child.

Those recounting the abuse they received as children talked about physical violence involving hidings and being smacked, hit, slapped and punched. The Inquiry heard that children are beaten with implements such as belts, sticks, pieces of down pipe, pieces of 4 x 2 wood, and other similar items. They were dragged by the hair and could be “slammed” into walls. Less commonly, people reported being bitten, strangled, smothered, almost drowned, and being “badly” beaten. The results of physical violence were bruises, cuts, chipped teeth, black eyes, broken noses, fingers and ribs, and in one case being burnt to death. The following woman recounted her son’s observation of her partner violently abusing his sister – her daughter.

*My son was sort of explaining, because he'd [partner] not just hit my daughter, he'd been standing on her neck. Holding her down on the ground, and sitting on her face, smothering her so she couldn't breathe. When my son was describing how his sister was turning pale, and she couldn't breathe, and he was scared she was going to die. Their dad thought that was funny.*

Participants in the Inquiry identified their fathers or mothers’ partners as common perpetrators of physical abuse against children, which often occurred within the family home. Often mothers were also being physically abused.

People also talked about being abused by other ‘trusted’ adults as children, such as the scoutmaster, nuns, uncles, teachers, and some foster carers.

People who talked about their child abuse acknowledged that there were different social expectations with regard to child-rearing when they were children – for instance, children should be seen and not heard and that it was okay to hit children. A culture of silence remains in relation to the physical abuse of children driven by the acceptability of adults hitting a child under the

umbrella of discipline. People also stressed that often parents don’t know how else to discipline.

Women had similar experiences of being hit, slapped, spat at, dragged by their hair, bitten, punched in their faces, elbowed, pushed, thrown to the ground or up against a wall, grabbed by the throat, choked until semi-conscious, stabbed, and less commonly they talked about failed attempts to kill them or their unborn child. Some people talked about their adult daughters or siblings whose domestic violence escalated to the point that they were killed by their partners. The following women talked about how they learnt to minimise the physical violence they experienced.

*“I don't think I ever got a bruise. I used to get hit, kicked, elbowed – stuff like that, but I never got a bruise. So in my mind, it was okay.”*

*“The abuse that I suffered from my ex, was never that bad, like he'd never haul off, he just punches me in the face or something, and that's always kind of what I thought domestic violence was. So it was when I was first kind of becoming aware that there's a problem in our relationship and it's not okay. In fact when he grabs me this way it is power and control and it is violence. Even though he's not hauling off and hitting me and leaving bruises, he's still holding me down. That's not okay.”*

Another woman talked about more serious violence.

*“It didn't become physical until after I had my daughter. He would often come round, early hours of the morning, drunk, on drugs, three or four in the morning, bashing on doors, windows and things like that. One time he let himself in, broke into my house when I wasn't there. I came home in the morning and I had my daughter in the pram, and I walked in and he was in my bed, drunk. He'd set off my fire alarm. He had cooked himself some food and whatever else. And yeah, he was still probably drunk. He grabbed my throat and shoved me*

*up against the wall, and I sort of struggled and pushed him off me, grabbed the phone and ran outside. I locked him in my room and rung the cops.”*

Overwhelmingly, the Glenn Inquiry heard that it was men who were more likely to physically abuse their female partner though we did hear that some men are abused by their partners. And, there was also a perception that a bias in ‘the system’ exists against men.

*There are households where the woman slaps him around the head and yells and screams at him before he turns around and punches her in the gut and does her real harm. Those people have problems but within our system we seem only intent on recognising one person as being the problem.*

Female partner to male partner abuse that people talked about took the form of slapping faces, scratching while they are being strangled, pushing in the chest when arguing, and hitting when they had been found out lying or being manipulative. Interestingly, as children they believed that they were in some way to blame by being naughty or not doing their chores. Violence was also reported to be a way of controlling siblings, although it appeared that older siblings “copped” the violence for younger ones. Threats against their mothers prevented children from telling anyone about what was happening. We heard that women also blamed themselves for the physical abuse occurring when they decided to leave or had left the relationship or if they got mad about something or confronted their partner.

Men were characterised as being a “total bully”, sadistic, crazy, angry, charming in public but horrifying behind closed doors, and having violent tendencies, as the following woman explained.

*He pushed me up against the stove and head butted me out of the blue, over nothing really and then threw me to the ground and lay on top of me and threatened to kill me. And I was terrified and I knew he wasn't himself. But I knew maybe the drugs had taken him to a place that he could potentially go to, because he maybe had a tendency.*

### Sexual Abuse

*“Nobody wants to know. No, who wants to know? You say your father had sex with you before you were two, people just sort of go, “Oh, yeah.””*

The Inquiry heard from many people who were sexually abused, mainly as children and we heard from some who were abused as part of the range of domestic violence tactics their partner used. Each person’s story is unique, and each is horrifying – the quotes used in this section are by no means the extremes that people talked about.

Sexual abuse is mainly perpetrated by men, although a very small number of people who came forward talked about women who were also perpetrators. Within the context of adult relationships, sexual abuse took the form of rape and for some was associated with physical violence and being forced to take drugs (for instance, injected with drugs). One woman also talked about her partner bringing other women home for sex as a means of psychologically abusing her.

Laying complaints of rape within relationships had mixed outcomes – for a few it resulted in a conviction, but generally the conviction rate was low. Some women did not complain to Police, primarily because they did not want their sexual history to go on display, to tell their sordid story to anyone, or simply did not want to be labelled as a “victim”.

By far the large majority of people who spoke to the Glenn Inquiry talked about sexual abuse. They shared their personal childhood stories



of sexual abuse, including the sexual abuse of their sibling(s). Mothers and grandmothers also came forward to talk about their children's or grandchildren's current sexual abuse.

The Inquiry heard that sexual abuse happens to both females and males. Both girls and boys were victims of child sexual abuse, perpetrated mainly by their fathers, brothers, older sisters and cousins who themselves had histories of being victims of sexual abuse by foster parents, and other family members such as grandfathers, step-parents and uncles, and their fathers' friends. In addition, some people reported being exposed as children to their fathers raping their mothers.

What was strikingly evident in the peoples' accounts of their childhood sexual abuse was that often their perpetrator abused other children as well. One woman asked,

*Who else? Because you can't tell me that I was the only victim. I know too much about sexual violence and domestic violence to know that there's no such thing as a sole victim.*

We heard from a number of people about victims who had been sexually "groomed" from infancy. The following quote is from a grandmother concerned about her granddaughter's explicit behaviours when she was changing her nappy. Her suspicions that the child's father was acting inappropriately were confirmed.

*"It was like she was on fire and she ripped off this nappy, sat up and put her finger inside herself, in her vagina. She went, "He hurt me, he hurt me, in here." You know, there's no f\*\*\*ing doubt what so flipping ever. What child screams anything like, "I don't like your finger?" And what child also goes, "I want to go back to my bed, I want to go back to my bed, please, please." And then coming out with stuff like, "Lick it, lick it, lick it, it's like a lollipop.""*

Child sexual abuse often begins with inappropriate touching, and the suggestion of sexual acts, and over time these behaviours develop into full sexual acts. The following mother talks about her growing suspicion, caused in part by her partner's psychological manipulation, over a period of four to five years. She had noticed that things were not right with her son and his father was acting inappropriately toward him.

*"At some point in my son's first year I realised that the sexuality was being directed towards the baby, or the baby was being touched inappropriately. And at the same time there was ongoing behaviour, both subtle and overt to wind me up and to make me feel crazy about what I was seeing, and what I was experiencing, to do with sexuality between me and the father, and sexuality between the father and the son, what was really right and what wasn't. So that built up over time, and at one point I discovered him kneeling naked by the cot and asking the child to suck his penis basically. There were more incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including watching him touching himself, using a hose to sexually stimulate the child. I lost it when I found him in the bath with the child and it seemed pretty obvious that he was blustering and pretending what had happened hadn't happened. ... [when the child was older] By this stage my child was verbal and he had for a long time been displaying extremely precocious sexual behaviour, that I found really disturbing."*

For some children, sexual abuse did not begin until they began to mature. What is very clear is that while children and young people did not understand what was happening to them, they generally knew something was not right.

*"I was abused sexually for five years by my father from the age of 10 to 15. And I had no idea that it wasn't normal at that point, not until high school, when there was a lesson about incest. And it wasn't a terrible abuse at the time, the abuse wasn't violent to me. It was,*

*I don't know, it was almost loving, I suppose. And also I felt like it was my fault that somehow I had done something wrong."*

We were told that when perpetrators were questioned or challenged about observations of sexual behaviour or a child's disclosure, mothers or others were often met with denial and explanations that led to their confusion about what was happening.

The Glenn Inquiry heard from people that child sexual abuse was shrouded in "secrets" and threats of death.

*I was abused as a very young child, up to about 10 ½ by my father, and the threat was death if I told or else I'd watch my mother have her throat cut. So I never told my mother, never told anybody. And it went on. It was regular and very physical yeah.*

Some children disclosed they were being sexually abused, mostly to mothers or another woman. However, disclosures were often not acted upon. Sometimes the person a child discloses to can have difficulty in making sense of what they have been told. Having had their own personal experiences of sexual abuse influenced whether or not women took action. Responses varied and included the child not being believed, blaming the child in some way, and in a very few cases believing the child. People also indicated that often their mothers or other family members knew they were being abused but did little about it.

*"My mother knew of the abuse which has been really hard because I hated her very much for not saving us. When I disclosed to my mother, she actually said the words, "You wanted it." I was a child, a little girl, and it was vicious. It was very vicious and she was under the influence of alcohol at the time when she said it."*

*I told one of my foster mothers about the sexual abuse. And she got my brother, who was the perpetrator, out of bed and told him that she would tie it in a knot if he did it again, and told me that I wasn't to flounce around the house in my nighty anymore, I had to wear a dressing gown. So I was eleven when I told, and nothing actually happened about it, until I told another foster carer a few years later.*

Mothers (in particular) perceived that acting on disclosures in an attempt to secure a child's safety is problematic and fraught with complexities. People talked about professionals, like general practitioners and social workers advising them that their child was "sexually advanced", for example, and therefore could not be believed. People also talked of Child Youth and Family doing little to help or court orders requiring children to stay with the perpetrator, often unsupervised.

*"My sister was the most sexually abused. Out of six foster homes, five foster fathers used her as a sex slave, some of the women knew. She reported it, and we've read her files, and at eight years old, she's reporting it - it's in her files. The file said she plays up to the men, is very promiscuous child, and nothing was ever done."*

Alternatively, complaints to the Police were often traumatic and ended up without any charges laid because of the child's age and their inability to provide reliable evidence. As a result the perpetrator was never held accountable for his or her behaviour.

*He has got away with it we believe, because a two year-old cannot testify against a 22 year-old and the Police have said that there's not enough physical evidence. But his name is on file.*

The Glenn Inquiry, however, did hear from one person about false allegations of child sexual abuse, and because of the secret nature of this form of abuse it was difficult to prove his innocence.

*“And clearly there has to be some means of filtering people who are the subject of allegations. I mean the present law says that you don’t need corroboration for an allegation of sexual impropriety and I accept that by their very nature, sexual crimes don’t have witnesses. It’s always something that happens in private. So you’re not going to get witness corroboration.”*

What was obvious in the stories about people’s sexual abuse was the intergenerational pattern of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour that exists within some families. Perpetrators were able to sexually abuse multiple victims within families and often went unchallenged. They were never made to be accountable for their behaviours, particularly when they used serious threats that often involved death to maintain their secret. But repeatedly people told the Glenn Inquiry that there were also people within the family who knew about the sexual abuse happening but chose to remain silent.

These hostile home environments enable child sexual abuse to flourish. People talked about brothers, sisters and cousins who had also been sexually abused and went onto become perpetrators themselves, some at a young age. Others spoke about the impact that sexual abuse had on them as a person. The Glenn Inquiry heard that children as young as four years old were treated for sexually transmitted infections. The sense of powerlessness to do anything about their situation caused stress-related illnesses for some, and for others depression. Survivors required long-term therapy and counselling. Childhood sexual abuse resulted in many entering into abusive relationships as adults.

## Emotional and Psychological Abuse

*“It was a fear thing and a self-esteem thing. I don’t know if I could cope with doing my day-to-day things if he doesn’t help me. He’d made my life so clockwork or so manipulated that I didn’t have the thought or the mind-set to say, “Yes I can do that myself. I can get out of this situation, I’m old enough, I’m smart enough, I’m me, I can do it.” I’d lost all that part.”*

The Glenn Inquiry concluded from what people told them that emotional and psychological abuse is generally well hidden from those outside of family homes, and its existence is extremely difficult to prove. A variety of strategies are used to control victims emotionally and psychologically, such as:

- isolating partners from friends and family members
- humiliating and shaming (especially if they cry or show emotions) in public
- calling them names
- eroding their confidence and self-esteem
- calling their abuse “love”
- threatening, controlling, monitoring, stalking, and
- subjecting victims to irrational rules.

The following woman, a lawyer by profession, talked about her experience of psychological abuse from her ex-partner, and of being stalked and harassed despite having a protection order. She talks about the impact of having to justify this form of abuse and the impact of “fighting” on her ability to parent her infant.

*“And I probably was one of those lawyers, and will admit, that if a female said to me “psychological” I would just say, “Oh, come on, that’s too much.” So I can now kind of understand, to put myself in that situation. But because I’ve been through it, I think I have a better understanding of not just dismissing a female, because there’s still a lot*

*of misconception out there that females do exaggerate. But there are also genuine women out there. So I think it's just better education that psychological abuse does exist. And in a funny way it's actually more damaging than being physically abused, because not only you are fighting the abuser who's actually psychologically abusing you, but you're also facing a lot of people who're actually disbelieving you and making you question your own mental sanity – maybe I am being over-reactive because that person seems to think that I am. So you're fighting that and then when you face the judge and the judge will question you as well. It's like, oh my god. And I think even the lawyers for the children they don't seem to understand that psychological abuse does affect the mum. Because you are fighting, I mean, how can you parent your child as well?"*

The drivers for perpetrators' emotional and psychological abuse appears to be varied. It ranges from coercing their partner to return to the relationship, to insecurity and feeling bad about themselves, to "playing God", to jealousy and narcissism. In some cases, the Glenn Inquiry heard perpetrators had an undiagnosed mental illness. Nevertheless, perpetrators go to great lengths to "hide" their role in the demise of their victims, as one woman told the Glenn Inquiry.

*"This is not an overt physical violence case. There was no hitting, no punching, no cutting, nothing awful like that – just insidious stuff, insidious psychological stuff, and sexual stuff. And I think that my son's father is a very strategic thinking, highly intelligent and he's not somebody that wants to be found out. He's not somebody that wants to be caught, or to be seen to do anything wrong at all, so he's going to do everything he can to avoid that."*

Without doubt emotional and psychological abuse disrupts victims from being able to enjoy normal everyday lives, particularly because they are living

under constant fear and threats. Indeed, people talked at length about the difficulty in "proving" this form of abuse, even when protection orders were in existence.

*I can't prove what he does because he's very cunning and very clever about it.*

Instead of a supportive outcome for victims, there seems to be an overwhelming portrayal that they are mentally unwell or crazy, something that lawyers and judges involved in the courts system buy into.

*Yeah abusive and subtle manipulation was totally ignored in court and throughout the whole six years by most parties, except for some of the counsellors who understand those behaviours. Otherwise the psychological stuff, it's out of the picture, which I think is a concern because it's always a part of the picture.*

Rather than victims and/or their children being afforded safety and protection while perpetrators are held accountable for their actions, the Glenn Inquiry heard from many that their safety was further compromised.

### Financial Abuse

*I didn't have any money of my own to escape with as he had full control of it all.*

People also talked about the financial control and abuse that made it difficult to live and to have the choice to leave a violent relationship. Women were mostly the victims of financial abuse when partners controlled the family's finances in such a way that it disadvantaged both them and their children.

Women became more dependent on male partners, particularly when they had babies and became traditional stay-at-home mothers. One person recollected his mother's financial abuse.

*“My father used to financially control my mother. She'd ask him for everything money-wise. He used to control us. We had to ask if we wanted a piece of fruit because there were four of us. He'd say, “Yes.” And then he would cut it into quarters, so he used to control portions, everything we ate, money, friends, everything.”*

Another woman highlighted the impact of financial abuse on her and her children.

*“There's financial abuse in terms of putting me in a situation where I can't afford the things I need. Yet, he claims to be poor. But he's going off and buying himself flash toys, thousands of dollars on a camera that sits in the corner. Not buying the kids shoes, which are needed.”*

Financial independence is important in terms of giving women options in their lives, and is especially important for those women wanting to exit a violent relationship. The impact of living in an abusive and violent relationship often hampered work prospects for many women. The following woman stresses the importance of financial independence.

*“Women should have full financial independence, because one of the things that forced me to stay in a poor relationship, a bad relationship, was that I didn't have financial independence. And if I did have financial independence, I wouldn't have had to be there.”*

Partners control finances in a variety of ways. They often had full responsibility for the everyday running of the home and paying rent, power, credit card debts, loans and the mortgage. Disturbingly, the Glenn Inquiry also heard from people whose

partners would also involve them in benefit scams – making them claim a benefit and taking the money. This type of behaviour also extended to elderly parents as well. People also reported that abusive step-parents could also control finances, such as taking over the family property and blocking any children's inheritance.

Financial control often continues after separation, especially for those women who came from middle or upper class backgrounds. Not only did these women lose any access to “joint” money, they were faced with partners who had the social connections and means to make getting what they were entitled to difficult. The Glenn Inquiry heard that wrangling over matrimonial property and liable parent contributions for the support of children compounded the legal costs to secure parenting and protection orders. Partners also tied money up in family trusts or company directorships in order to declare minimal income to avoid child support obligations and matrimonial settlements. One woman said,

*I've paid out over \$30,000 in the seven years. It's to the point where I just really can't afford to. And it's not been my applications to the court, it's been my ex, wanting to change things because it didn't suit his relationship with a girlfriend at the time. Anytime it was working for us, me and the kids, he'd want to change it again.*

On the other hand, for women living with high deprivation, leaving relationships often meant they could be ineligible for legal aid and were unable to afford a lawyer. Most of the people speaking to us about financial abuse, were talking about current ongoing struggles they had because their children still needed financial support, or because the legal costs associated with the separation were ongoing.

## Normalisation of Abuse and Violence

The Glenn Inquiry heard from most people that the normalisation of child abuse and domestic violence are major issues facing New Zealand. Families, “good” or “bad”, are the learning ground for appropriate and inappropriate behaviours – this is where children learn what is right, what is wrong and what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. The following woman spoke about her family history of violence – something that repeated itself in her adulthood.

“So basically I was a child who came from an extremely violent family background. My father was, I would describe him as sadistic, and if I told you that he would tie my mother to the bed and let his friends rape her that is just all I want to say about my father. As a result my mum had a mental health breakdown. She had eight children, Dad and her had eight children. We were all put under welfare, we all have been sexually abused, and we all have, including the brothers. We have all done well, we’ve all done well. But some of that, some of my brothers and sisters are definitely affected by this.”

The reality for many families where child abuse and domestic violence exists is it becomes a normal feature of family life. Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours are normalised in everyday life – simply, children and adults “don’t know what they don’t know”. Children grow up into adults thinking abusive and violent behaviours are normal because their life reality has framed abusive behaviour and ways of interacting with others as normal.

So as a child I grew up in a very violent household with physical, emotional, psychological abuse from my father, and that was towards my three sisters and myself and my mother. As a young woman I selected violent relationships. Both of my daughters, I have two daughters aged [in early 20s], and both of them were sexually abused over many years by my ex-partner.

Often the onset of abusive behaviour is slow, subtle, and sophisticated so that children and people do not realise what is happening.

“The very first time I realised there was something weird in our family it was one of the first days I went to school when I was five and the teacher wanted obviously to pass five minutes with everybody. He said, “Go and write down 10 reasons you love your parents.” And that kind of show-stopped me ‘cause I have never felt the emotion of love for my parents. I technically had the care and consideration for a human being, but right at that point all I could think of was how scared I was of my parents. And it was a bit of a shocker to think, “Wow. These people actually feel love for their parents and they’re going to write about it.” And that was the first clue I had that something was not right in our house but the family, the relatives all knew things weren’t going great.”

It is not until something happens, or they are exposed to others with a different reality and “normal” way of interacting, that many people in abusive situations realise child abuse and domestic violence are not normal and are in fact destructive. Sadly, for many it escalates into environments that are unsafe and involve children.

## Maintaining Factors

*“People cover it in certain sections of society. They put a front on, they shut the door and then they go beat each other up and yell at each other. They just don’t do it out in public where people can see.”*

People told the Inquiry that there were multiple factors that maintained the child abuse and domestic violence happening in New Zealand. Unquestionably child abuse and domestic violence is life-changing for those involved. It leaves lifelong emotional and psychological scars that wound their spirit. Whereas for most people the physical wounds heal, the psychological and spiritual wounds are more difficult to heal, especially because these wounds are caused by those who should love and care for them. New Zealand’s child abuse and domestic violence is maintained on many levels – by societal beliefs and attitudes, its ‘drinking culture’, the system, external factors, and by those involved and their families.

## Society’s Attitudes

Most people talking to the Inquiry spoke about a general apathy toward child abuse and domestic violence across New Zealand society. One person described the embedded nature of violence in our society.

*“The seeds of violence in our society lie in the basic structures basically and I do agree that there is basic individual responsibility. We can’t get rid of that because people do have to take account for what they do. But the way to overcome violence is to look at the core of our society.”*

Despite this, a number of people talked about an overall unwillingness of people generally to talk about child abuse and domestic violence beyond individual family tragedies, ensuring these issues remained within families.

*Society, I think as a whole, has a lot to answer for. We rely significantly less on extended family and support networks and we’ve become very insular.*

*But the other thing too, talking to other people about this stuff, it’s pushed down. It’s a dirty thing. So, no one talks about it, and it gets brushed under the carpet.*

Violence in New Zealand is considered okay and normal, along with the marginalisation of certain groups in communities (for instance, the disabled and certain ethnic groups). People reported that neighbours, teachers, health professionals, social workers, and others often ignored both domestic violence and child abuse. We heard that ignoring child abuse and domestic violence seems to be related to the existence of victim and perpetrator stereotypes, and is made worse by unconnected communities and situations that serve to isolate victims.

## Alcohol and Other Drugs

The Glenn Inquiry heard from numerous people that New Zealand’s drinking culture makes alcohol easy to access and encourages binge drinking. They linked this drinking culture to child abuse and domestic violence.

*“This alcohol business is, you go into small little towns, what do you see? Bottle store, bottle store, pub, bottle store, restaurant, bottle store, supermarket. Who the hell said buy your beer from the bloody supermarket? It’s so accessible and its entrenched in our society. I don’t know how we’re ever gonna change that culture, I don’t know how we’re going to.”*

*“While I was living with my ex-partner’s family I saw that they condoned violence and they would not intervene if any of the women in their family were being beaten by their partners, especially when everyone was drinking.”*

There was also a sense of desperation about the need to change this drinking culture. People overwhelmingly observed that alcohol and/or drug use (including some prescription drugs) led to violent behaviours. In some situations alcohol and drugs were used by perpetrators as a form of control over their victims, whether they were children or adults.

*Alcohol fuelled my husband’s aggression. When he would wake up in the morning he was so regretful, half the time he couldn’t remember what he did.*

*[Name] started the abuse and then after that he carried on by giving drugs, so I was a drug addict at the age of 11.*

People also believed that parents’ use of alcohol and drugs resulted in ongoing neglect of their children.

*They both knew she was sick and neither of them bothered, ‘cause they were drinking.*

The Inquiry also heard that alcohol and drugs used by perpetrators and victims were used to avoid having to deal with feelings regarding abuse and violence.

*“But when they’re under, become altered states of mind I call it, they’re a whole different person, aren’t they? And the two are bad enough on their own but mix them and it’s just like a cocktail every night.”*

## System Failures

People talked about the government services that contributed to the maintenance of child abuse and domestic violence. Failures are numerous and include:

- not believing victims
- poor collaboration between statutory agencies and non-government organisations
- inaccurate or misleading documentation
- a lack of intervention or follow-up when abuse has been reported
- frontline workers not identifying “warning signs” or detecting abuse
- violence and other programmes failing to change behaviours
- complicated structures or eligibility for access to services, and
- a lack of support for those accused when bailed.

The Glenn Inquiry heard from people that the Police, court system (including the Family Court), and Child Youth and Family all in some way contributed to the maintenance of child abuse and domestic violence. While people acknowledged that recently the Police were dealing with domestic violence better and were more likely to believe victims, there were some reports that Police still bailed perpetrators to victims’ addresses or failed to prosecute or intervene appropriately when abuse was reported. However, people were most scathing of the court system (as will be explained later in the report) which failed to believe victims; treated them based on domestic violence and gendered stereotypes; failed to enforce court orders, especially protection orders; and fostered abusive situations through lengthy court battles or custody arrangements that forced victims to have ongoing contact with their perpetrators or abusers.

*“And the whole concept [of safety is] that if there’s violence, you want to get yourself and your kids to a safe place, which is what I did.*



*But then the court system keeps trying to send your daughter back to an unsafe place, without any assurance that anything's changed to make it a safe place.”*

*“This could've all been stopped back when I first applied for a protection order when I was pregnant, and it could've been stopped then if the court system did their job, if I had any support, instead of being forced into counselling with him and into a situation where he could manipulate me.”*

Child Youth and Family were seen to remove children from parents, which deterred parents or family members from reporting child abuse and neglect or ask for help. We heard that Child Youth and Family staff were not trained sufficiently to deal with disclosures of abuse, do not record information appropriately or do not always act on information about child abuse. This put children and their mothers at unnecessary risk.

*What we often find with our clients is that, for instance, the requirements that are put on them by Child Youth and Family don't reflect an understanding and a knowledge of the dynamics of family violence. Similarly the justice system.*

*She was having supervised contact with dad, was found naked with dad during the supervised contact, and nothing's reported. Nothing kind of happens, the agency kind of knows, and it kind of buries it.*

Frontline workers reported that non-government organisations also failed to report incidents to avoid a Child Youth and Family “fall out”. There were also reports that foster parents were not appropriately vetted. Generally, those people who talked to the Glenn Inquiry held beliefs that family group conferences and other such systems used by Child Youth and Family fostered abusive situations.

### External factors

The Glenn Inquiry also heard from people that a range of external factors helped maintain child abuse and domestic violence. People reported a general lack of support for parents who were often under stress. External stressors, such as lack of housing, money and work, affected people's behaviours.

*“The contextual factors that lead to the situation being seen as violent, and for people living in poverty it's often the cumulative effect of poverty that's so debilitating.”*

In addition, people talked to the Glenn Inquiry about the difficulties with confidentiality of information in small towns that discouraged disclosure of violence. These factors made it difficult for victims to leave violent and abusive relationships, and encouraged the abuse and violence to continue.

We also heard from a number of people who talked about how the Christchurch earthquakes impacted on their lives, causing couples previously separated because of domestic violence to get back together because of the stress of living with ongoing earthquakes and limited housing available.

### Perpetrators, victims and families

The reasons victims remain in violent relationships are complex. They include trying to keep their family together, being isolated from support, and a reluctance to disclose for fear of making their situation worse for their children and themselves. People talked about how difficult it was to escape abusive situations and their many attempts to do so. Many perpetrators use control and manipulation to maintain their status – they do so by portraying their victims in a way that makes it very difficult for them to be believed or to disclose their violent relationship. Perpetrators can go to great lengths to hide their violence.

*“It was the worst and I was sitting there feeling like, “Well no one kind of believes what I’m saying. Maybe it is what’s happening to everyone, maybe I deserve it ...””*

We also heard from a number of middle to upper socio-economic status Pākehā women about the difficulty of leaving abusive situations. They wanted the people of New Zealand to know that domestic abuse affected their part of society too. Disclosing the violence they lived with was exceptionally difficult for them, often because of their partner’s position in the community, their connections and financial wealth.

*So he’s a highly manipulative person. He is also a [profession removed] so he’s protected by his position and that’s where we are at the moment.*

Victims reported remaining in their relationship because they believed they could “fix” the situation, they believed it was their fault, they turned a “blind eye” to it, or they were unable to see the extent of the violence. They also talked about fearing the consequences for the perpetrator and themselves if they disclosed.

*Domestic violence and child abuse is still such a hushed subject and denial was my best friend. I just wanted to be loved, even if it was from a monster.*

Asking for help was seen as a sign of weakness or would impact their pride. Family members, the Inquiry heard, are frequently not supportive of addressing the violence that exists within their families or they do not support victims to leave their violent relationship, especially in families where violence had become normalised. Some family members do not act because they fear the consequences.

*My son’s beating his wife, who’s got three or four children. But if I say something they’re gonna go into CYF’s care, he’ll go to jail and where am I left? They’re not going to ever talk to me again.*

We also heard from people that victims with poor literacy and numeracy skills found it more difficult to escape. The following quote illustrates how education can change women’s lives and enable them to get jobs that give them independence.

*“When women are educated, when we educate our women that’s huge. The impact is that we can get jobs, different jobs.”*

### Sharing Their Experiences and Its Impact

*“And I think one of the other things [is] that, in terms of depression, [it’s about] recognising the warning signs, and really looking after myself, like actually valuing me, and saying I need to look after myself, so that I don’t fall apart. Because I’m not going back to that place again, and again when good support networks are around me, it’s pretty awesome.”*

Abuse and violence occurs across New Zealand’s society, and in varying combinations of physical, sexual, emotional/psychological and financial abuse. Contrary to popular belief, the people who spoke to the Inquiry wanted to make it clear it happened in all socioeconomic, gender and ethnic groups. Child abuse and domestic violence was mostly inflicted by a male perpetrator, although the Glenn Inquiry heard that some perpetrators could also be women. Child abuse and domestic violence usually happened directly to victims and/or any children who were present, or indirectly by threats made towards victims’ close relatives, friends and/or their pets. Often in the beginning it is not clear to victims that they are being abused or what they are living with is violence until such time as it starts to worsen. Person after person told the Inquiry about

violence that had become rooted into their lives, sometimes going from generation to generation.

For many, their abuse began in their childhood.

*“Oh, I’ve had a terrible life. I’ve not really had a childhood, 25 years of abuse and sexual abuse – mentally and physically and verbal.”*

*“I suppose I’m a victim or a survivor of child abuse. And I think having been brought up in a Pākehā middle-class family where it was hidden, kind of added a whole new dimension to my experiences. So basically my mother was the main abuser, and mainly emotional, but also physical. There was kind of weird sexual stuff that happened as well, mainly linked to health stuff. My dad was a [profession removed to protect this person talking to the Glenn Inquiry], and is now quite well known within that field, so they got away with a lot because of the privileged position they were in.”*

Survivors of child abuse and domestic violence have a variety of emotional/psychological, physical, behavioural, and social responses and impacts resulting from daily and ongoing abuse and violence. People told the Inquiry that these effects were mostly long-term. Those abused as children, either directly or growing up in a home with domestic violence, were also likely to enter into violent relationships as adults, as either victims or perpetrators.

### Impacts of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence

The people who spoke with the Glenn Inquiry made it clear that the reasons and excuses for child abuse and domestic violence often don’t make sense to victims, which increases their vulnerability. The negative effects of living with abuse and violence do not stop when people decide to leave their relationship, or when families have undertaken actions to address the abuse and violence. Negative effects live on for most people, even when they live in “safer” homes and communities, as the following person stated.

*As intelligent as I am, as much counselling as I’ve had, there are still some triggers I react to.*

The Inquiry heard that most people who had lived with child abuse and domestic violence experienced its aftermath in many ways – for instance, long-term problems affected them physically, mentally (emotionally/psychologically), spiritually and socially, in varying combinations.



*As I knew no different type of life, I went on to have a number of abusive marriages, and relationships. I have had a couple of mental breakdowns, have been hospitalised a few times and still suffer badly.*

The ongoing effects on people’s emotional and psychological wellbeing could be triggered by dreams, nightmares or flashbacks, and by certain events, people or environments. These effects include mental health problems like depression, anxiety, eating disorders, inability to sleep, and fear of being in open spaces. The Inquiry also heard from people who had addictions that were mostly alcohol-related, although a few people also talked about their drug use. Emotional responses included ongoing anger and hate, which for some were overwhelming. People also experienced a mixture of other emotions like fear, hurt, shame, guilt, sadness, grief, panic, bitterness, feeling unsafe, threatened, and vulnerable, “crap” and/or “dirty”.

*And he says, "You're angry." That makes me angry. I'm like, "Well f\*\*\* yeah I'm angry. Duh!"*

For some people, these feelings were so great that it led them to feel like they were unable to carry on and feared "losing it", while others reported considering or attempting suicide in order to "escape" from the violence.

*The suicidal ideation, the stuff that goes through my head does not go through people's heads who didn't come from this background. Now I know enough not to act on my thoughts, they're just like static, they're just noise but the shape of those thoughts is what I pay attention to. The first time I planned a way to kill myself I was five and it wasn't to get rid of myself, it was to escape that environment. I didn't think that would end me, I thought that would get me out.*

It was also not unusual for people to question their sanity, especially when they had been psychologically abused. For many, they became overly sensitive to violent environments, and some could no longer tolerate any form of violence. This sensitivity could also extend to being nervous around Police.

In addition to internal personal struggles that people had resulting from living in violent unstable homes, many of those talking to the Glenn Inquiry reported difficulties coping with their everyday lives and socially.

*"Even now as an adult I find it difficult to trust others, concentrate for long periods of time and often react badly to what other people would find acceptable or normal. Employers need to be educated about the potential that there are parts of their workforce who have been abused*

*and scarred deeply and how to approach these people. I once got the courage up to explain to an HR manager that due to my childhood experiences became very nervous when dealing with another employee – my HR manager told me that it was my problem and I should just 'get over it' or get sacked. I got sacked."*

People talked about having to cope with rejection, being unable to make decisions, and lacking confidence and self-esteem. Violence, particularly psychological violence, also affected their sense of identity.

*So I think that the effect of living in an environment where everybody is living a lie and how for you as a child, how much, how deeply that confuses you and makes you very vulnerable.*

Those abused as children reported how their child abuse and/or the domestic violence happening in their homes negatively impacted their development and ability to learn.

Many people also talked about the effect of violence on their physical wellbeing with some reporting having had a range of health conditions, such as cancer, stroke, migraines, immune-system problems, exhaustion, and other stress-related conditions. Others believed that their heavy drinking, drug-taking and cigarette smoking were coping strategies that resulted from growing up and/or continuing to live in unstable and violent home environments. Some people told the Inquiry that they lived with permanent problems directly caused by the violence they lived with.

In addition to personal health problems, people talked about how the violence they lived with contributed to difficulties forming relationships, related to feeling disconnected and isolated from others and problems with attachment. Perpetrators

reported that protection orders left them unable to have contact with their children, making it difficult to maintain relationships with them. Frontline workers often commented on the ability to connect and attach with others (for example, have empathy with others) being crucial for healthy relationships. The following frontline worker, reflecting on his own experience, explained.

*Through my work, I've learnt that a lot of difference between myself and the guys that I deal with is empathy. I carry empathy and I feel it, therefore, I don't want to hurt that person. So personally what I ended up doing when triggered, was ended up hurting myself 'cause I couldn't hurt anyone else.*

Child abuse and domestic violence affected how people were seen by others in their families or social situations. People reported a general sense of having let their family down. On the other hand, those who had been abused as a child and/or lived in homes where domestic violence was happening felt let down by their parents and other adults. Victims (especially those of child abuse) also said that they were often attracted into relationships with abusive and violent partners. One person described it as “some sort of magnet ...”, although others believed that the perpetrator would somehow change.

*“The chaos is normal. It becomes just something, I don't know, like [how] your body clock seems to function or something. I also come from a childhood of domestic violence, which is obviously what I think connected me to this individual, because the magnetism was so intense.”*

Without doubt, child abuse and domestic violence disrupts the relationships both victims and perpetrators have with other family members or those outside of their family. The impact on children is clear. The Inquiry heard that many children were forced into spending time with a parent they are scared of, while others had to learn to live different lives as they moved between parents where there were joint care or custody agreements.

*I wish they'd take domestic violence a bit more seriously. To think that shared care, it's not shared custody. I've got full custody and he has contact. It is shared care, but the care is not happening in his ball park. If the kids are not being fed, aren't being cared for on a basic level, there's something wrong there. And I'm certain he has got psychological problems that haven't been diagnosed.*

Loss was a key feature of surviving child abuse and domestic violence that took many forms. Children lost the opportunity to have normal lives, often reporting losing their childhood. Many domestic violence victims talked about loss of their reputation as a result of being portrayed as “crazy” and/or the cause of the abuse and violence. Leaving a violent relationship or home also led to losing education opportunities (especially in the case of young people escaping child abuse), financial security, employment and stable accommodation. For some, this involved moving city or country. Loss also extended to not trusting other people – family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues, professionals, and especially those they believed should be keeping them safe.



## Staying and Leaving

Leaving violent or abusive relationships is not as simple as packing bags and walking out the door. Understanding why victims remain in violent relationships is puzzling for many, but the reality for victims is a very complex, sticky web that keeps them there, as the following woman explains.

*But if you've got a child, I can't get away from the man. I tried to, when my daughter was six weeks old, I tried to move on with my life. I had no boyfriends, he'd scare them off. He'd constantly come round to my house. I'm married now, I've got another child and he's still harassing me. It just doesn't make sense. How can people get away when these violent horrible men won't let them go?*

A variety of reasons exist about why people remain in violent relationships, although the Inquiry heard this was a mixture of trying hard to keep their family together, being isolated from the necessary supports that can help keep them safe when they do leave, and a reluctance to disclose their violence and abuse for fear of worsening their situation, especially for their children. The following two people's experiences show that despite leaving or wanting to leave, it is extremely difficult and dangerous to leave a violent relationship and not return.

*One of the biggest mistakes I made was letting him [stay], forgiving him all those millions of times ... "No it's different, see how different it is, I've changed." But he never actually repented and it took ages to work that out. He never actually repented which is changing his behaviour. He always said, "See how different it is?", when it all looked exactly*

*I left the refuge and went to my sister but that was not very good. But because her husband was very good friends with him, that was no good, so really I felt like I had nowhere to go in the world.*

Aside from violence being normal for many families, people talked about how their families encouraged victims to stay quiet, "covering up" what was going on or were simply unsupportive. Families that normalised violence were often not willing to address their histories of abuse, and could not be relied on to intervene or get involved. Victims' isolation was aided by perpetrators covering their abuse and violence and denying their behaviours were in fact abusive when challenged by others.

Most victims of child abuse and domestic violence did not have "freedom" of choice – their abusers' actions and threats prevented victims feeling sufficiently 'empowered' to make a decision to walk out the door, for themselves and for their children (where they had them).

*"There is this thing where people would say, "Well why don't you just pack up and go? Why don't you just leave?" But you don't because your kids are at school and because you've got two dollars in the bank and because when you get somewhere then what's going to happen?"*

Leaving often happened when the violence had worsened to the point of fearing for their lives. The Glenn Inquiry heard from many people that leaving was not a simple choice made lightly because they lived in fear of what would happen, especially when previous attempts to leave had failed. Victims were often without the necessary supports to leave successfully, or they were not believed when they disclosed to people. The following woman describes the fear that also accompanies leaving a violent relationship.

*“I got to a point in my marriage where I was so scared to be sleeping in the same house as him because he was very secretive, he was quite a bit of a bully. And I got to sleeping with, under my pillow, a hammer. It’s weird to me even to talk about that, how I got to that point and think that I was sleeping with a hammer under my pillow just in case, it’s just bizarre. Even getting a lock, getting a locksmith in and getting a key made for my door so I could lock it at night-time to feel safe. And even the girls, my daughters were young girls, but even they felt, they’d be jumping into bed with me and I’d lock the door so at least we’d feel safe sleeping at night.”*

Aside from increasing risks to their safety, leaving brought victims multiple challenges that included being homeless, having no money, and being faced with stigma and false accusations, such as a common misunderstanding that women on benefits are “having children to get the DPB.”

*So when me and my ex-partner split up, I had nowhere to go. We lost our house, our rental... We ended up living with my cousin in a 3-bed- room house, she’s got four kids, plus her partner, plus me, my two sisters and my four kids. So she took in, [all of] us, she got in trouble with her landlord because she had too many people there.*

## Freedom from Abuse and Violence

The Glenn Inquiry heard about people’s ideas and experiences of becoming free from family violence or abuse. This included what the experience was like for them, the catalyst(s) for it happening, and how the violence/abuse cycle was broken (including interventions that assisted with the process). People also spoke about different types of activities that they had become involved with since, and/or offered advice to others in a similar situation.

## The Experience of Becoming Free from Abuse and Violence

Many people spoke about their experience of becoming free from abuse and violence, and the nature of this process. A key issue raised was the length of time that it took, with several highlighting that it usually occurred over many years. Indeed, one individual noted that it had taken her “30-odd years”. Linked to this, another person spoke about the length of time that may be required for perpetrators of family violence to change their behaviour. Other comments included:

*So I came to [place deleted] and that’s when everything just fell apart in such a major way, it was just such a breakdown, it was like everyone had died. And kept on dying and all the worst things that could happen and it just, it went on and on and on and on. Until, only just like halfway through this year it stopped. But that’s how long it took.*

*And also [my] 10 years tells you that walking a path of non-violence does not happen overnight. And it doesn’t happen from a 12-week course or a 26-week course.*

In line with this, the experience was not always linear with some individuals describing it as an ongoing process:

*“Expect to hit rock bottom, come up a little and nose dive again, you will, in the end, get there.”*

While asking for help was seen as important by many, it was also acknowledged that this was not necessary an easy thing to do. “Bravery” and “courage” were seen as necessary in order to reach out to others, particularly when considering barriers such as fear of violence, stigma, embarrassment, or failure:

*Find a safe place and a strong friend and don't be scared to rely on them for a while. Let people help you, even when you're scared that they will be dragged down by your abuser, let people help you because they're stronger than you.*

*Find the courage to ask for help. So simple to say, so very difficult to do. Fear of retribution is so absolute.*

*... the fear of embarrassment and loss of dignity, and that of actually, well, admitting failure, seeking help is colossal.*

We heard that many survivors of domestic violence never felt fully free from the abuse.

*"... I mean there's no doubt that I've got positive stuff going for me. It's just one of those things that I think any sort of abuse doesn't go away... It's fine when they're not around, but when they are around it's a different story."*

*"And it was interesting, as a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, I absolutely know that there are still triggers. As intelligent as I am, as much counselling as I've had, there are still some triggers that I react to. And yet I can say in my mind, 'I'm safe, this is not a perpetrator'. But that doesn't stop my body from reacting to the trigger. For a split second I return to being a 40-year-old."*

The need for a strong sense of self-worth was highlighted as being integral in deciding to make a change, and to attempt to break away from a life of violence and abuse. Some people spoke about it in terms of feeling empowered, whereas others highlighted the importance of valuing self.

As stated by one individual, *"Love yourself enough to leave"*. Other comments included:

*"Self-care is so important. Valuing your own worth."*

We heard about how it felt being completely free from abuse and violence. The sentiments conveyed were generally overwhelmingly positive, with a number describing the sense of relief they experienced as a result of no longer living in fear:

*And so knowing that I was coming home that night and he wasn't there was just the greatest thing, every day that he wasn't there was just amazing.*

*I can go home and it's peaceful, and no one's there abusing me, or ignoring me. I would rather go home, to where I know I'm not expecting someone to be there, do you know what I mean? I just heard the other day, two houses down from me, people arguing, and my neighbour was laughing at it, and I'm just thinking, well, I just said to him, "I'm so glad I don't have to put up with that anymore, I don't have to put up with that, I love it."*

Some discussed how much better, overall, their life had become as a result. This included improved relationships with their children, involvement in new interests and activities, and an increased sense of happiness:

*"Life just gets better as I get older and my kids have grown up and started having their own families. They are both well-adjusted and in stable loving partnerships. I am a grandmother now and very happy with my life."*

*"It gets better with time, once you are out of the situation, life slowly comes back to some normality and happiness creeps back in to your life."*



*“What are the good things in my life? My children, and I’m studying which is really good, yeah I’m doing a degree in social work... The positive things, I’ve got my health I guess and quite a few friends.”*

### Catalysts for People to Become Free from Violence and Abuse

There was often a defining moment or series of events that acted as a catalyst for change and/or precipitated an end to their experience of violence. For example, one individual described how a “flukey” set of circumstances led to his life becoming free from abuse. This included moving to a new town around the same time he lost his cellphone, which meant he had no way of contacting previous “bad influences”:

*A couple of months in my cellphone broke, and so it’s like I kind of just got a fresh start. And then that was when I was 16 so it was coupled with kind of maturing and kind of just a flukey kind of period of two months where, you know... You know, all of my friends from back when, all that was going on, they’re all in jail or on P now and it’s like, you know, that’s the path I was headed down and then at the very last second a tree fell over and I went, “Oh let’s go this way”. You know? (laughter) So I was very lucky.*

Another person described how things changed after a significant “event”, and one individual recalled that they had had an “epiphany” at a young age, which shaped their future direction:

*“And then I realised one day with an event that happened that I was protecting the enemy that lived in our house. The person that was supposed to protect us and support us, I had been protecting and supporting. And that was my wake-up time I guess.”*

*“When I was a little boy I was walking home from school, it must have been religious instruction at the time, and I was walking home and obviously I’d been going through some shit, I was seven or eight. And I was thinking to myself there’s got to be more to this shit life than this, I was looking up to the sky and maybe it was an epiphany, I don’t know what it was, and it just, it was a seed that was sown and that was something that I held on to I suppose.”*

We heard that in some cases, the catalyst was the fact that things had reached such a level of dysfunction that something needed to change:

*And I left them because I couldn’t [go on], I left [place deleted] because I had been such a drunk and I had turned to prostitution and I needed to leave to start again ‘cause I really felt like I was gonna, I just couldn’t cope, I just couldn’t look anywhere in that town without feeling like, shame.*

Several people spoke about having children as a key motivator for change. In some cases, they were driven by a need to protect their child(ren) from potentially violent or abusive situations. A desire to create a life for their child that was different to their own, was also a trigger for some individuals:

*“And then when I was 19 I got involved with a guy whose father was the president of a gang. And even though I was sort of involved with the gang, which I’m not proud of at all, even back then they used to scare the shit out of me, I was scared that’s not the kind of life I wanted to live. And then I fell pregnant and that was it, I just thought, no I just have to and that was it. And so I tell my children that they actually saved me.”*

*It was a matter of keeping my child safe, and I wanted them to grow up without fear and to be happy and self-confident and to try and have a good honest childhood, and to know that there were decent men around who would treat them with respect and be kind and they were not all tarred with the same brush.*

One person noted that while she had initially stayed in an abusive situation for the sake of her children, she ultimately realised that their lives were, “more important than any relationship”. She also went on to say:

*If your pregnant it's okay, I left when I was pregnant and I always stayed for the kids and in the end I left for the kids. It's okay. Love yourself enough to leave.*

### Breaking the Cycle

The Glenn Inquiry heard how many had made a conscious decision to break the cycle of violence or abuse within their family. This was undertaken in a number of ways, these are not mutually exclusive, and people told us they sometimes adopted one or more of the following behaviours.

For some, a key aspect of breaking the cycle was removing or distancing themselves (and possibly other family members) from a violent or abusive situation and/or the abuser:

*“Sometimes you just need to walk completely away from the dysfunction. Make a conscious choice, that as a kid you had no choice but to be around dysfunction, but as an adult, choose to never put up with it from anyone.”*

*“So what things helped me move on from my father? I cut my ties with him pretty much. If we see each other we're civil, and we do see each other at family events, and we're civil and that's it.”*

Many people consciously chose a new path or direction in life, which often involved something novel within their immediate family or social networks. This included, for example, engaging in education (either at a secondary or a tertiary level) and/or seeking employment:

*“I actually recall being at [name removed] High School, very early, third maybe fourth form, and I recalled learning something about breaking [the] cycle, I can't even remember what it was about. I remember learning something and cycling home, and thinking about that, as if something in me was like, yeah I'm not gonna carry this on. And so I made a conscious decision to stay at school. I stayed until my seventh form year, and I made all those decisions knowing this is how I have to break the cycle, I have to be the first of the family to have done something.”*

*“And then like with my sisters, 'cause we all dropped out of school kind of thing and then they started going back to school and we all started. Like my older sister would be like, “Oh yeah this is the research on, this is how we were brought up kind of thing”. And so yeah it was just talking with whānau, getting educated, more jobs and things like that 'cause all of that stuff is, that's where the arguments start.”*

Some people indicated they had elected not to embark on intimate adult relationships as a way of protecting themselves from future abusive situations:

*“I've chosen at 52 now, I don't want another relationship. I live alone, I have a little dog and two cats, strays in my sleep-out, because that's the safe option. I don't wanna go down*

*that path again. I like having food, I like having money. I like being able to go places because I can, and my stuff belongs to me.”*

*“... from when I was 17 I thought, “I’m never gonna do what my mum has done, I’m never gonna make those choices. I’m never gonna have a man speak to me that way or treat me in an inappropriate manner. I’m never gonna marry someone that I can’t trust. I’m never gonna have some, I’m never gonna get pregnant.”*

As suggested above, some people spoke about how they had made a conscious decision to never have children themselves. This was usually due to a fear that they may repeat the harmful behaviours of their own parents or other family members:

*But another ramification of all of my childhood is that we don’t have kids, and that’s a choice that we’ve made. Because I trust myself enough to know that I can be in a relationship with an adult who I can reason with, another person of my equal but I actually don’t trust myself enough to go down the kid route. I just, I have these, I have, because of my past I figure it’s like Russian roulette and I’d just rather not even play the game. I just take myself out of the game.*

*No, he and I cannot have children because we’re too worried about repeating this... Yes, because I still feel like a child, un-grown child, a baby inside and so broken and if we have children I would worry automatically [that it would] go to the same kind of story or similar, don’t have to be the same but it might be a different impact.*

Those who had gone on to have their own children discussed a number of strategies they employed to ensure that they ended the cycle of violence within their family. Similar to those who had elected not to have children, these individuals wanted to ensure that they did not emulate the child-rearing patterns of their parents. As such, they spoke about being more open with their children, adopting non-violent disciplinary techniques, and modelling good communication patterns:

*“Just reflecting back, more or less reflecting back on the things that I’ve seen and then the stuff that happened to me, I didn’t want that to happen to my kids and I don’t want to see my son doing the same thing to his, ‘cause like I tell a father, just making these kids behave, they’re going to behave like you if you don’t cut it out.”*

*“I’ve got five children, and I’ve never hit my kids, I’ve never hit them. And I like to think that was because of how I was treated when I was a child... When my kids were growing up I said, “Well look, you don’t need to smoke behind the school yard, if you wanna smoke, smoke here in front of me”. I tried to just sort of be more open with them, and certainly never disciplined with violence, never have, only because of the shocking violence I received as a child.”*

In some cases, people told us about speaking openly with their children about their own experience(s) of abuse as a way of ensuring that harmful patterns of behaviour were not repeated:

*“... because I just think that if you’re quiet, if you keep quiet about it, it allows it to continue. So I’ve said right from the start, I mean my girls and I don’t discuss it, we don’t sit down and have a discussion, but they’ve known right from the start what my family’s been like. Hopefully they have the confidence not to allow that to happen to them, you know, you just hope.”*

*We talked about it, we can talk about it in our family. Well we do talk about social issues in our family that were never even thought about, I wouldn't have dared thought about it when I was a teenager.*

### Interventions

The Glenn Inquiry heard about interventions that had assisted them in leading violence-free lives. These included counselling and other therapies, support groups (including for substance misuse), self-help strategies, assistance from Government and other help agencies, and family-based programmes (e.g., parenting courses).

Typical comments included:

*“Support programmes for children provide an opportunity for emotional healing, connecting with other children who have experienced similar challenges, and the skills to seek help and avoid getting caught up in violence.”*

*“Agencies can help. Try them all to see what works for you. Don't worry about losing possessions or setting up house, WINZ will help with those things and you can take an advocate if needed.”*

### Making a Difference

In speaking about their lives since becoming free from abuse and violence, people told us about different types of activities that they had become involved with. This included both work-based roles, as well as volunteering or other informal support. A common theme across these was their link to family violence and/or associated issues. For example, one person had since begun working for an alcohol or other drug service, another was undertaking a degree in social work at the time of the research, and one woman was providing a “safe home” for young people in her community.

Interestingly, one woman spoke about how she would like to volunteer at a refuge or for a helpline service, but felt that she would find it too difficult emotionally.

*“I want to do something like volunteer and help but I'd just be a big mess, I'd just be crying all the time.”*

Many people told the Inquiry about how they sought to utilise their own (generally traumatic) experiences in a positive manner to help others.

*“But the biggest thing that gets me up every morning is my experience, but also my ability. I'm in a position of power, well not even power, but I'm in a position where I can change someone's life. It's one life at a time. I've got a young client, he's fifteen, no family and when there's no family there's no family ... he's my best friend he would say to me, he puts it on Facebook, my best friend is my social worker.”*

*“I've always provided a safe home to the best of my ability. I have stray kids from all over at my house, because they know it's a safe place, they know they'll get a feed, they know they won't get abused and they know they can camp there 'til they need to. And that's wrong apparently. Nobody did that for me.”*

*“I'd love to get the story out there and have a book that's half way between the refuge sort of self-help, getting safe book and have stuff about what a healthy relationship is and a plan.”*

### Advice for People Affected by Family Violence or Abuse

Those affected by family violence or abuse who took part in the online submission process were asked what advice they would give to others who have experienced domestic violence/abuse, or who are rebuilding a healthy family/whānau or healthy violence-free relationship. Key advice given is:

Advice	Quotes
Seek help and take it when offered	<i>Don't put up with the situation from the start. Get help from Women's Refuge. Leave and go to a safe house.</i>
Remove yourself (and your family) from the violence/abuser	<i>If I have anything to say to domestic violence victims, it is do not let your children grow up with violence in their lives.</i>
Take little steps – it takes time	<i>Work together on issues one at a time. Do not overwhelm yourself with other things. If the situation gets heated, take a break. Little steps.</i>
Surround yourself with love and nurturing	<i>When you come from an abusive background the nurturing that you need wasn't there and it needs to be replaced by ourselves as adults.</i>
Self-care is important	<i>Be kind to yourself, be gentle and be true to yourself. I made a choice that everything I was going to do was going to be gentle and kind.</i>
Spend time doing things you enjoy	<i>Pay yourself \$25 a week pocket money, whether you can afford to or not... Not for smokes or alcohol, but on things like lingerie and massage and make-up and movies or coffee, or jewellery or tattoos, whatever is your thing.</i>
Communicate openly with others (including children)	<i>Have meals together, turn off the telly and radio. Talk to each other!</i>



## Summary

- There are many types of abuse and violence – physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial.
- For many people in our society, abuse and violence has become a ‘normal’ way of interacting. Often children and family members in these situations have no experience of ordinary relationships and family life.
- Attempts to inform others about violence and abuse are often met with denial, ridicule or disbelief.
- Obvious signs of abuse are frequently ignored by family members, teachers and others close to the family.
- Domestic violence and child abuse is an issue that is largely hidden from society. A culture of secrecy surrounds this type of offending, which can enable it to go on for a long time without being addressed.
- Domestic violence has strong links with our society’s permissive attitudes towards heavy drinking and the use of other drugs.
- Leaving a violent situation often heightens the risk to the safety of family members and those involved.
- Many people who had been abused as children went on to become victims or perpetrators of abuse and violence in their adult lives.
- Impacts of child abuse and domestic violence are very significant and often lifelong.



# SECTION 2

## *What's working well*



## SECTION 2: What's working well

Within the context of a system that people claimed was generally not working, people also spoke to the Inquiry about helpful practices and services. Woven within their stories were the things that worked well for people with regard to seeking help for their experiences of child abuse and/or domestic violence, and for frontline workers, what they saw as successful practice. Without question, the attitudes and behaviours of people working in services and agencies and inter-agency collaboration were two key things that made a difference for those affected by child abuse and domestic violence, seeking support and assistance. Presented in this section are the positive aspects about the various people and organisations that people brought to the attention of the Glenn Inquiry. These are things which made a difference for those affected by abuse and violence, particularly with regard to the Police, Courts, Child Youth and Family, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), community organisations, Women's Refuge, and education and health providers.

### Characteristics of People Who Make a Difference

People told the Inquiry that there are genuine people in their families, the community and all parts of the system with the heart and commitment to help, and who made a real difference. These people didn't give up. Most people repeatedly pointed out that it was frontline workers,



neighbours, friends or family members that made the difference between their experience of an organisation's help working well or not working well. Those people who made a difference and contributed to a service working well were described as:

- genuinely caring about victims and perpetrators
- interacting with them in a non-judgmental, gentle, patient, compassionate and empathetic manner
- willing to listen and believe what the person was telling them
- being responsive, and
- willing to take action in order to help.

These frontline workers, neighbours, friends or family members were also praised for:

- "going the extra mile"
- "sticking their necks out", and
- "taking risks".

People who looked to empower the individual and created a feeling of a sense of belonging were seen as helpful.

*Everyone needs to feel significant. Empowering someone to participate in some activity, group, help for others, engages people in other events outside of their world and focus.*

*... if you have that connection with your neighbours and with communities and people going back to their marae, being reconnected with whānau, you're going to be preventing family violence 'cause you start relationships and you start caring about each other more and that the spinoff is that, or if whānau aren't coping then people can go in and help.*



... it's [about] working with communities at a local level, engaging with the families through that system. We need to create support systems so that families don't feel they're struggling with the difficult job of bringing up kids on their own.

I think it's just the belonging, like they feel like they belong to this whānau awhi kind of thing, it's like it more or less becomes their whānau because their real whānau, you know, might be drinking and playing up and yeah just doing their thing.

The following are examples of some of the things people told us.

“My current social worker actually cares about what happens to me, rather than just being a job.”

“My WINZ case manager stayed with us even when she was relocated to another office, which is against the rules but it really helped us as a family. It reduced the stress and anxiety of going into WINZ and having to deal with a stranger, which is a huge challenge for someone with depression and PTSD.”

Importantly, these frontline workers, neighbours, friends or family members trusted a victim's intuition regarding their safety, and normalised people's struggles. Responsive frontline workers were reported to be well resourced to do their work. Frontline workers also said that working with those living with the effects of child abuse and domestic violence involved pushing boundaries:

“Sometimes with our roles you have to go beyond what the job requires you to.”

## Characteristics of Helpful Services

Characteristics of helpful support and services included those that encouraged engagement, those focused on the specific needs of the group being targeted, services that incorporated whole family support (rather than focusing on one family member), and holistic programmes such as Whānau Ora. Programmes that provided safe places to talk, emotional and moral support, or that taught coping skills were also highly valued:

“Whānau Ora's a wonderful example of being able to trial something that we know is going to work and has worked for centuries, and works well with people. Anything works well with a holistic understanding and consideration and application, I suppose.”

“Women's Centre provided community support by way of listening, caring, providing of information. Violence intervention programmes provided a safe space to talk about what had happened, emotional and moral support to reclaim a sense of personal worth, skills to de-escalate stressful situations, and the inner resolve to leave relationships that were un-responsive to the need to change.”

“As an agency, we now work with all members of the family. We've been providing services for men at the point of crisis since April 2012. And one of the reasons for that is because we wanted to reduce complexity, we wanted a much more integrated holistic response. We believe that by working more effectively with men at the point of crisis we will enhance the effectiveness of our services for women and children.”

Services which were able to quickly respond in times of crisis were valued by people, and the need for after-hours services in order to achieve this was also discussed. For some, it was important that solutions for basic needs (such as safety, money, accommodation etc.) were dealt with first, before proceeding with long-term planning:

*I feel that a longer bigger picture needs to be looked at. And with people in stress and abuse, saying 'Well if we do this and this, in one year or 10 years this is where you could be', is rubbish. Asking where do you want to be in whatever number of years is pointless. In these situations thinking any further than the next 12 hours can be next to impossible.*

*Life has to be lived and this requires on the spot solutions—housing, finances etc.*

*And that, how she [name of manager deleted] does that is allowing us as frontline workers to work how we want. So flexible hours, because family violence doesn't happen Monday to Friday, 9 to 5.*

Some people thought that interventions which were longer in duration were more helpful than shorter programmes, which may fail to change behaviour patterns which have become ingrained over an individual's lifetime:

*"It's my experience that people who are changing a long embedded culture of violence, and of bad behaviour and being able to get away with bad behaviour, take a long time to change that, and to bed that in. It's not a five minute, or six week programme, it's not just an intellectual pursuit."*

*"There's a huge process for them [men who have been violent] to get through that, as far as I can understand, it takes a long time, takes a lot of willingness and a lot of effort because they've usually had to deal with their own abuse and stuff."*

*"... however long a woman's lived in violence, without support, without intervention, it can take up to that long again to relearn and retrain and practice."*

A small number of individuals made reference to support and services for perpetrators. The importance of providing non-judgmental support for perpetrators, and providing an opportunity for them to express their frustrations and weaknesses was seen as being valuable. The importance of such support was often placed in the context of the fact that those who abuse, have often been victims of abuse themselves:

*We also, stand with the abuser in court or dealing with the Police. They and we know that they are victims of many abuses themselves.*

*Where possible, we take a holistic approach to domestic violence, ensuring that the offending party has relevant supports in place as well, and that the family unit is taken into consideration as part of any interventions offered.*

## Inter-agency Collaboration

*"Why doesn't this organisation know what that organisation does? I'm in the youth offender team, where we're trying to make a difference with youth, so we liaise with Police. And knowing my background in Police, they're targeting the right people, and they've got this huge database, so they know all the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. To some degree they'll know the victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse, the other ones that could tie in would be Women's Refuge, and all the domestic violence agencies, and CYFS. I think that if we could go through that database, we could identify the intergenerational stuff."*

Overall, the most pressing need for people who live with violence and abuse is for all organisations to “sing off the same page”. Many people talked to the Inquiry about the importance of effective and compassionate inter-agency collaboration and supportive partnerships between the victims and agencies themselves. In the words of one frontline worker,

*We could work with the CYFs workers really well, because if we can do the therapy with the kids and they can do the family work and we can work together, how good is that for the whole community?*

Better serving children and their families who are living with domestic violence, involves efficient information-sharing, increased humanity and consistent support and follow-up from a variety of service and community organisations.

According to the people who came forward to speak to the Glenn Inquiry, effective inter-agency collaboration involves agencies working together for the purpose of combined problem solving that focuses on improving the lives of children and families. Inter-agency collaboration requires workers from a range of different organisations to work alongside victims and/or families to facilitate positive changes in their circumstances. Such work requires information sharing and engagement among the various organisations and agencies involved in working with a family, for the benefit of the family.

*“We believe that working collaboratively in this space means all working together, and importantly, all working with an analysis of domestic violence.”*

*“We need a lot tighter inter-agency workings and supports. It's hard to actually pick a perfect system, but if you've got all the agencies working together instead of one here that has*

*no idea what this one's doing and that type of thing, that can't work. Until we've actually got the sort of inclusive cooperation, I suppose in agency workings we're not going to really truly address it, because a woman being beaten up is only one part of the picture. Or a child being beaten up, there's a much bigger picture, there's a whole culture of that of abuse within that family at different levels.”*

Inter-agency collaboration occurs on multiple levels, from frontline case workers, families, mental health providers, teachers, and others, to relationships between policy-makers and administrators responsible for putting in place government and organisational directives, funding, and review of child abuse and domestic violence programmes. In addition to national and local organisations, inter-agency collaboration can also involve public, private, and/or faith-based sectors as partners.

Encouragingly, there are already examples of the way forward. A number of very effective collaborations were described by the people – most occurred in small towns where “agencies have to work together because they are under-resourced”, or where “a significant crisis has necessitated a change in the way they work”. One frontline worker from Christchurch stated that since the earthquakes there have been some positive changes to the way agencies work together as a means of addressing the complex needs of families from that region. She said,

*They wanted to get together, capitalising on the gift that the earthquake environment gave us, which sounds like a mad thing to say, but it is very true. There is a very fertile soil of openness to try new ideas, because we have been forced to, and people are really thinking outside their boxes.*

To achieve strong inter-agency collaboration, it was apparent that communities need strategies that engage stakeholders and support their involvement in all aspects of the design, implementation, evaluation, and change of the way services are delivered for child abuse and domestic violence. Many people also spoke about the importance of involving those who have lived with child abuse and/or domestic violence in designing the solutions and services. While inter-agency collaboration suggests a focus only on agencies and services, people told the Panel that family members and community-based organisations can also make valuable contributions.

*“I think here in [small city], having our close networks working together collaboratively, and I’m talking both government and non-government agencies, that works really, really, really well. As a frontline worker, I know so many people in the agencies, including Child Youth and Family. If they bring up a name I’ll go, “Oh right, now I can. . .” At Child Youth and Family, I can relate to that worker because I’ve worked with her before. So I can put at ease our family by saying, “Yes, I know there’s a history about CYFS, they take children and break up parents, all of that kind of stigma, but help me to work with her because we’ve got to do this. There’s a reason why you’ve got an open file here.””*

*“We have some really exciting strategic partnerships and we have some really fantastic operational partnerships. So I’ll just talk briefly about our strategic partnerships. We are part of an alliance of six agencies that are working together to essentially co-design quite a transformative response to families affected by violence within our communities. In order to achieve this, we are currently working together to co-locate our services. And fundamentally what we want to do is to reduce the complexity. We want to make it as easy as possible for families to receive the broad range of services and supports that they need to overcome family violence.”*

Evident in such strategies were a shared vision, common goals, and mutual benefits as a result of families and stakeholders working together. The challenge is to build on these models of effective collaboration.

## Education Providers

In addition to family members, teachers are the group of people who interact with children on a daily basis. Many victims reported that teachers who were interested in their wellbeing and their lives outside of school, made children’s lives better. The following people highlighted the important role schools have.

*The school counsellor was the first person I told. She was fantastic and very supportive, but as it was my final year at the school the support soon ceased. I later learned that she quit her job as she was too upset after trying to deal with my family. Her level of training had not prepared her for what I presented to her.*

*Attending school is one of the most important socialising experiences in a child’s life, as well as being a useful means of providing structure in the form of consistent school routines.*

Because of their closeness to children and families, many people who talked to the Inquiry considered that the involvement of teachers from kindergartens and play groups right through to tertiary providers (such as institutes of technology, wānanga and universities) is crucial and that they need to be appropriately trained and equipped to “pick up signs of all levels of abuse”.

*“Schools are a key agency in abuse prevention. They have the young people, the professional leaders and the links to the wider community.”*

People talked about often disclosing abuse when they were children following classroom presentations about child abuse or personal safety. They often made these disclosures to a person they trusted, felt safe with and/or who they believed would help, for instance their teacher.

Sometimes disclosures were made directly where incidents of abuse were talked about. However, most disclosures were indirect, which meant that the child shared the details of the abuse in a roundabout way and/or they attempted to 'hint at' the abuse in some way. In most cases the signs of potential abuse were not actioned.

Education programmes in schools that address child abuse and domestic violence are seen to be effective if they increase students' understanding of healthy relationships, safe sex, life skills, communication and self-esteem.

*“Health classes in schools touch on abuse – more needs to be done here. Make this subject a priority.”*

*“I would like to see education in all schools regarding these things. Not heavy handed scare tactics, just start with simple things. Don't assume that from a very young age children don't need to know about these things. And never assume it only happens in certain families. Granted numbers maybe higher in certain areas, but it happens across the board. Anyone dealing with both adults and children in these situations needs to have real education regarding this. The need to build self-esteem in all cases of any sort of abuse is a major issue. And this can start at a very young age. The move to break the cycle has to be a top priority.”*

People said domestic violence education programmes and counselling services such as ChatBus, and Keeping Ourselves Safe were models that worked well.

*We're putting some resources into low decile [schools] and that's great because they need it. But abuse and domestic violence happens right across the board right, it's not just in low decile-type families it happens in the rich professional families as well. So I think that we need to have front line services for all the kids so that all of them can have access to help. And I mean [ChatBus] is working, it's a model that works really well.*

*I couldn't get into a programme to equip me to be able to deal with recognising and dealing with my suspicions of child abuse. I'd really like to see a policy change at government level for all teacher education programmes and I'd like to see compulsory sex ed. We have Keeping Ourselves Safe, which is an optional programme which I've managed to get into my school because I asked for it, and it's now run in our school every other year, but I feel it should be compulsory, that programme.*

However, people were clear that they must be delivered by supportive school staff that students trust to maintain their confidentiality. People also said that staff running these programmes must take a genuine interest in students, encourage healthy self-esteem and be mindful of not making individual student's situations worse. One person commented on why it is extremely important for teachers to advocate for students if their disclosures become public.

One of my worst memories is sitting at school in front of a teacher, and having these kids taunting me about going home and f\*\*\*ing my grandfather and one of the kids turned around saying, "Well how much does he pay you? What are you worth?" And this is in front of this teacher, and I looked at her, I stopped and I looked at her, just wanting her to step in and stop it, and she was just looking at me as if to wait for me to answer. Now I don't know if it was because she was stunned by what she was hearing, or that she wanted to hear the answer but that silence [pauses while sobbing] it was almost like the final straw for me. From that I deduced that no adult can be trusted, no adult is there to support me.

Play Centres were perceived by some people as an effective context for ongoing education for parents and children who live with domestic violence. Play Centre is seen as having good connections with local community and community organisations. They encourage a sense of community among parents and support them to develop skills and learning positive ways to interact with their children. One parent stated that her involvement in Play Centre made all the difference for her and her son.

"I took my son to a playgroup and then to Play Centre. Where do I start? There are so many ways Play Centre helped. Play Centre had a no hitting policy so I had to learn other ways of dealing with misbehaviour. I still hit my son at home but gradually learnt ways to cope and hit my daughter far less. I also began to gain a little self-esteem – I undertook various positions and realised I could do things. I ended up hearing about and then attending a course called "Positively Me". This began to help although it was extremely hard, but I did realise that I didn't have to accept the constant criticism I'd become used to. I also

attended child development and positive parenting classes. These were free of charge and babysitting costs and transport costs were reimbursed. The child development course was run by a wonderful lady and during the course, she talked about abuse, specifically sexual abuse. She urged us to admit if we had ever been abused. I think I quietly put a note in with one of my assignments. Nothing happened, nothing was said. However, I now see this as a watershed – I realised what had happened to me was not my fault and gradually started to shed the burden. Hopefully, I have given back to Play Centre some of what I received. I wish everyone could take their children there."

## Health Providers

Victims of domestic violence routinely seek care for health complaints related to their abuse. Whilst many cuts are salvaged, broken bones are set, and emotional problems are medicated, there is rarely a genuine attempt to uncover or address their underlying cause. Nevertheless, a number of people who spoke to the Inquiry were able to identify what happens when health providers "get things right". One person stated that she received,

To actually have a breakdown, and be in hospital, and receive good care, 'cause I did receive really good care in hospital, and that was a difference. I received good quality care. So good quality medical care, and access to good quality services, and quick access, I didn't have to wait months and months and months. Although I did have to get to the point where I literally fell apart at work and they had to take me to psych services.

Other helpful incidents mentioned included:

- a quick acting and responsive crisis team when a victim was going through a psychotic episode
- effective long-term counselling which helped a woman to recover from a lifetime of violence and abuse
- a psychologist who “knew her stuff” including the importance of “healing the mind, spirit and soul as well as the body”
- psychiatrists who “get” domestic violence, and
- professionals with specialist skills in prenatal counselling, parenting, complementary medicine, and mentoring.

People also spoke of the importance of good liaison and collaboration between agencies to facilitate access to appropriate services. In some instances:

- GPs (general practitioners) helped victims to access timely ACC-funded counselling
- teachers helped initiate investigation processes following a child’s disclosure
- Plunket workers identified problems early, arranged for referrals and followed them up
- counsellors linked patients with the Union of Fathers or Women’s Refuge
- GPs negotiated creative avenues to enable people to access low-cost counselling, and
- Child Youth and Family supported a victim’s application for a sickness benefit.

One victim highlighted the importance of being able to access the right services.

*Having a good counsellor enabled me to identify and understand what I was experiencing. I didn't actually know it was domestic violence because my ex-partner had bipolar...she was one of few counsellors who 'gets' domestic violence.*

People also mentioned that the effectiveness of specialist providers/programmes included those with:

- a specific Māori focus
- health camps which enabled time out for abused children or parents, and
- hospital programmes that sometimes allowed ‘social admissions’ to keep women safe overnight.

Each of these examples demonstrates the positive impact inter-agency collaboration and/or differentiation of service delivery can have on the lives of those who live with domestic violence and abuse. The following frontline worker’s experience of a lack of inter-agency communication and follow-up illustrates the importance of inter-agency collaboration and the transfer of crucial information.

*One family I worked with, there was suspected abuse of children and domestic violence, however no evidence. Being an NGO we had no mandate to ask further questions with others. At a later date I was meeting at the local hospital and was able to see the files of the family, which showed regular visits to A & E for injuries to the children, and reasons for the injuries were odd. When I discussed this with the nurse she looked in more detail at the files and said nothing had been forwarded for further investigation. If there was a central file for families then this could have all been pieced together. However I understand that human rights dictates there will be no big central watchdog for all citizens.*

Many people said how important it was for all health providers to clearly document and to make non-judgmental assessments of any injuries that victims sustain during domestic violence events. Detailed documentation enables Police to produce timely protection orders. Mental health treatment and support is also seen as a normal part of recovery from trauma, and therefore, should not translate into labels that victims are, for instance, an “unfit mum” or “mentally unstable”.

People said that health providers play an important role in early intervention for families. For example, health professionals’ early involvement with pregnant mothers, especially those without partners, meant they could get the support that they needed at what was seen as a stressful time. People stressed the importance of including young fathers as they also need to be mentored to support their partner and children. This enables them to have their questions answered about dealing with babies, and supporting their mothers. As one person said,

*They have too much stress and worry in their lives already.*



## Police

Some people spoke of an apparent improvement in the services offered by the Police in recent times. People described effective Police officers as being:

- person-focused
- sympathetic
- supportive
- non-judgmental, and
- able to manage domestic violence incidents.

People said that the Police were more likely to seek opportunities to liaise with other services in the best interests of victims than they were in the past. For instance, people gave examples of the Police calling in a mental health service and/or sexual violence support people when needed. One Police officer spoke about the holistic approach taken that looks at the family as a whole.

*“Where possible, we take a holistic approach to domestic violence, ensuring that the offending party has relevant supports in place as well, and that the family unit is taken into consideration as part of any interventions offered.”*

The Police were also seen to be reacting much faster, and being more caring and supportive when attending domestic violence incidents. Some people commented that whereas once people were handed pamphlets by the Police and left to find help themselves, they were now more helpful when assisting those needing help in times of crisis or need.

*When I finally did ring the Police after being beaten up they directed me in all the right directions for help.*



Another person spoke of the effectiveness of the Police Family Violence team, stating many Police officers were,

*“Well versed in domestic violence [and made a] huge difference to the safety of affected parents and children. A policeman who was working in a children's abuse team came and spoke to me personally, completely recognised and understood my concerns, and was very reassuring.”*

Many people who talked to the Glenn inquiry felt that Police were victim-focused and worked with other agencies enabling better information-sharing. These practices reduced the amount of stress placed on victims to make many appointments and avoided having to repeat distressing accounts of the violence they had suffered.

*The Police were super helpful and supportive. In my first relationship when I finally did ring the Police after being beaten up, they directed me in all the right directions for help. After the break-up of my second relationship and after the rape happened, the Police were really supportive and kind to me. They, along with Victim Support, directed me to the Living Without Violence programmes and the help available at Family Works. I cannot speak more highly of the detective involved in my case and the way it was handled. Amazing and this caused the biggest turning point for me.*

In addition, consultation with specialist Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Teams by other colleagues working with victims and perpetrators ensures the complexities of abuse and violence are understood.

## The Courts

People shared their positive experiences of the justice system with the Inquiry. Positive experiences were associated with:

- having an experienced lawyer recommended by a support agency
- being supported by an agency that applies directly to the courts for protection orders, rather than waiting six months for something to go through court
- lawyers who knew the processes for freezing the assets of an ex-partner at a time soon after the incident, and
- agencies that fully fund the processes around protection orders.

But overall, the people who talked to the Inquiry had few good things to say about the Family Court process, which will be discussed in detail in the section, *What's Not Working Well*.

## Family Court

The Family Court generally aims to help people sort out their issues and endeavours to ensure that the interests of children are represented in the process. Some people said that they were able to access satisfactory help from Family Court advocates, court-appointed psychologists and agencies, like Barnados, who helped them to navigate the process. Barnados was seen as particularly good at helping people to write to the court (rather than using Lawyer for the Child) and ensuring that their child's or children's voice and perspective were heard.

People told the Inquiry that they valued having combined law processes that prioritised mediation and protection of the victims of domestic violence, although some commented on the importance of recognising the time for people to change behaviours.

The Family Court was seen to be effective when it was efficient at organising interim (temporary) orders. Protection orders are seen as particularly useful for raising awareness so people are more likely to act.

*“People around you are more aware and more responsive; if you don't have one, they don't respond.”*

### Lawyers

Integral to the success of the court's process is an effective lawyer, particularly with regard to assisting clients to understand and work with the Family Court's processes, rules and limitations. One person said that at a time in their life when most things were beyond their control,

*A good lawyer is a blessing [because they] make life bearable.*

The Glenn Inquiry heard that effective lawyers were described as:

- good listeners who try to explain important information clearly
- giving people time to be heard
- taking the time to explain the processes for accessing entitlements and the reasons for not being able to access these, and
- helping their clients understand how the court works, and how to express themselves effectively.

Participants in the Inquiry argued that it was helpful when social workers, people trained in child development and child psychologists worked together during the Family Court process. They found that being involved earlier in the Family Court and restorative processes was helpful, and enabled them to avoid becoming entrenched in long and costly legal battles.

### Child Youth and Family

Overall, people indicated that children's safety and wellbeing must be a high priority.

*“Outcomes for children need to be paramount and should be measurable, attainable and realistic.”*

Child, Youth and Family have a role to play in keeping New Zealand children and young people safe and strong. Child Youth and Family claim that they work in many ways with families to help them find their own solutions and achieve their goals, or connect them with the right services for them in the community. Many of the Child Youth and Family frontline workers who spoke to the Glenn Inquiry reported very positive feelings about their ability to change and save lives but felt constrained by overwhelming workloads and limited resources. They and others talking to the Glenn Inquiry wanted to remind people that many children were associated with Child Youth and Family because of exceptional circumstances.

*“CYF kids are not there of their own design, of their own making, they are there as a result of unfortunate circumstance and a dysfunctional family.”*

People stressed the importance of working with people in a way that believes victims and promotes their self-esteem. This is more likely to result in successful outcomes for individuals and families.

*[We need to] work with women in a way that leaves their mana intact ... have a conversation without stripping them of whatever little mana they have left.*

*Somehow I managed to luck into an amazing social worker who I felt listened to me and I felt was on my side. Reading through the notes as I did, it's quite obvious she didn't fall for a lot of the stuff that my mother was doing. Because reading through them [notes] there's a lot of lying going on her [mother's] part.*

People stressed that effective Child Youth and Family social workers genuinely listened and tried to find “holistic” solutions to improve children’s lives. Effective Child Youth and Family workers were described by those talking to the Glenn Inquiry as:

- being professional
- being consistent
- not being easily manipulated or persuaded by perpetrators
- maintaining a focus on the child and improving their lives
- listening to the voices of children more because they have solutions, and
- working alongside parents to find appropriate ways to “heal the whole family”, where possible.

*“There were only two social workers in our journey of nine years that I would ever, ever have faith in. They were fab, I was so pleased to find them, they were on our side. So yes I think the pendulum swings towards the children, which it does, that's the focus, but so are the support people around them, us.”*

Working effectively with families can include insisting (and monitoring) that parents attend counselling, family group conferences, parenting and/or anger management courses. Frontline Child Youth and Family workers also talked about the importance of continually looking for additional ways to support mothers.

*“[We need to help mothers] get through the impact and effects of family violence, so that they can get to a place where they're better able to be the protective parent that they need to be. [Because] dysfunctional families are not able to sort out all of their dysfunction without some sort of support.”*

Other frontline workers promoted improving inter-agency collaboration. There was a general belief that agencies providing supports like income, housing, counselling, and education, should work together to become more helpful for women and children, particularly keeping them safe.

*If a woman leaves a partner without good support systems, they will end up just going back.*

*Yeah, I was naughty. Everyone's naughty. But having the right support networks around you growing up makes a difference. Man, I had the best social worker. A Pākehā woman, trying to guide this young Pacific Islander in the right direction, and I was like, “Oh f\*\*\*...” But every time I was down and out, “Hey. Yeah, stay there, I'll come and get you.”*

There was general agreement on the importance of social workers beginning their careers needing to work alongside more experienced social workers to benefit from their wisdom. This was considered particularly important when they are facilitating family group conferences and/or making home visits to assess children’s progress and wellbeing. This approach prevented or minimised inappropriate practices that are sometimes linked with inexperienced social workers, by providing support and guidance, especially as many did not have a robust understanding of domestic violence.

## Work and Income

Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) provides financial assistance and employment services, offering a single point of contact for New Zealanders needing job search support, financial assistance and in-work support. A number of victims of domestic violence spoke to us about how supportive their WINZ case workers were. However, many talked about how case workers often had to work “around the system” to help them access the right support. Many people acknowledged their “luck” and/or “good fortune” in being assigned a case worker who had positive qualities and wanted to help them. They were described as,

*Professional and empathetic case workers who genuinely understand what has happened for people when they are seeking to access financial support after leaving a violent relationship and who treat them with care.*

One victim of past child/adolescent physical and sexual abuse recognised WINZ’s support provided during her most difficult times.

*I will always be grateful to my country for the financial support I had through my years of depression. It was very difficult ... [I] ... needed financial support but I could not work for a long time and being able to still survive and feed my son eased the burden.*

A number of people pointed out that WINZ has specific case workers who are assigned to family violence cases at each regional office. They talked about these being vital roles because case workers are knowledgeable about the complexity facing WINZ applicants living with violence. These WINZ workers were said to be particularly effective

because they worked well alongside a number of other community and governmental agencies to get appointments quickly and help set victims of domestic violence up with new accommodation. People said that they needed case workers who:

- were constant
- had a working knowledge and empathy about mental health issues, homelessness, domestic violence and child abuse
- told them about their entitlements
- assisted them with accessing counselling, and
- informed them of the waiver of the six-week stand-down in situations of domestic violence.

Supportive case workers realised that sometimes victims of violence need support to make even the simplest of decisions because, in some cases, their ability to make independent decisions has been denied to them for many years. One person spoke about her deep gratitude for her case worker’s compassion and knowledge.

*“I ended up with a case manager who had some knowledge and compassion for people struggling with mental health issues. She stayed my case manager throughout the time I was on the benefit. She kept me even when she was relocated to another office or I moved house – this is against the rules but it really helped us as a family. It reduced the stress and anxiety of going to WINZ and having to deal with a stranger, which is a huge challenge for anyone with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. I am so grateful to her and will never forget the kindness and respect she always showed me.”*

Courses offered by WINZ were seen by people to be helpful, although the Inquiry heard of areas that could improve, such as their timing, the availability of onsite counselling, and consideration of existing skills.

## Community Organisations

Many effective domestic violence programmes and/or organisations employ qualified and/or experienced psychologists and counsellors. According to a number of the people who talked to the Glenn Inquiry this makes a big difference to the quality and rigour of the programmes they offer. Organisations that employ qualified and experienced community workers are perceived by people as being more likely to be well informed in terms of their systems, legal procedures, policies and ethical guidelines and expectations. Experienced and effective community workers are also more likely to pass this information onto clients ensuring that their clients benefit from their “insider knowledge” of the system. Some people talked about the effectiveness of peer-based organisations or who are staffed with volunteers and frontline workers who had “been there” (that is having past child abuse and/or domestic violence) themselves. One victim of domestic violence shared her admiration for, and total trust in, her case worker because she had “been there”.

*“My case worker has experienced all of the same things herself. She went away, got educated and now she is back here helping others. She shows real leadership. She walks the talk.”*

People reported that community organisations employing passionate and non-judgmental people who were willing to listen and treat their clients with dignity and compassion connected better with victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. The people described a number of community organisations that were effective. The approaches taken by these organisations helped victims of domestic abuse to:

- protect themselves from the psychological, physical and emotional distress generated by living with a person addicted to a substance
- feel listened to and cared for
- find the right professional and/or legal advice
- have a safe space to talk about what has happened to them
- receive emotional and moral support and reclaim a sense of personal worth
- develop skills to de-escalate stressful situations, and
- find the inner resolve to leave relationships that were unlikely to change.

The issue of funding was also raised.

*The more the funding's an issue for small community organisations, the more that the frontline workers have to take on more and more clients.... More money to do more of what we've always done is not the solution to the problem. We don't need more refuges, for example. We need a much more innovative response.*

*[Programmes] require better resourcing so that organisations can meet demands, and also enable well-qualified professionals to be employed.*

The people also mentioned how important it was to effectively monitor programmes and increase community organisations' accountability so that they continue to focus on “really making a difference in peoples' lives”.

## Women's Refuge

The Women's Refuge is an independent community organisation that works at many levels to help prevent and stop domestic violence. Most significantly, Women's Refuge provides a safe space for women and children in times when they have no safe place to go. People generally had positive comments about the Women's Refuge. Many women told the Inquiry that they felt empowered and supported in their interactions with this community organisation. Refuges were seen to be "a place of safety for women and children" generally staffed by people experienced in domestic violence situations. People mentioned that many of the Refuge's education programmes around awareness and safety planning were practical and useful. Others said the Women's Refuge was able to vouch for effective lawyers who understood domestic violence. One woman spoke of the relief she felt when she realised she was actually safe from harm at the Women's Refuge and the ways she has "given back" now she is free from violence.

*"Even as I talk now I feel like running away and my legs actually feel like they are really moving. It is just recall. But, thank god for Refuge. So I went there with my girls and I remember sitting on the sofa and thinking 'this is where I belong because this is my reality'. It was a relief to have arrived but I still felt a deep sense of shame as well. So now, many years later, I go back. It is a joy to go back and do work for them. I go and do the pick-ups, because I am good at driving, and I clean the refuge house getting it clean for the next family."*

A number of frontline workers from the Women's Refuge came forward to the Glenn Inquiry to share their experiences of working with women and children who live with domestic violence. Many of these frontline Women's Refuge workers saw their main role was to:

*Stand up for your client, and advocate for them ... [and] ... enable them to tell their story ... even if it is uncomfortable for us to hear.*

One frontline worker went on to say:

*I love seeing women be okay to speak their truth, speak to their reality. I want them to know that they have a right to do that, no matter how shocking it is for other people to hear. There is nothing wrong with them standing up for themselves and saying 'the reason I don't leave is because every time I leave he finds me and drags me back and rapes me for three days straight'. People need to actually know the reality that people are living in.*

## Corrections

Corrections is one of the largest government departments in New Zealand, employing over 8,000 staff, the majority of whom work with offenders in either New Zealand's prisons or the Probation Service centres across New Zealand. Corrections work with a variety of other community groups and agencies aiming to protect the public and ensure that offenders receive the help they need to turn their lives around.

*"Working alongside other agencies allowed us to identify high-risk perpetrators and provide frontline staff with relevant information to assist them when they attended domestics involving these couples. It also enabled us to provide relevant information that could be shared with CYFS where children were involved and oppose bail in high-risk situations where perpetrators had been arrested. We also set a policy that perpetrators were not to be bailed to victim's addresses as we found that where this had occurred before in some situations victims were assaulted again."*

People believed that offenders in prison need easier access to counselling so that they can better understand the triggers for violent behaviour and the inter-generational nature of violence in their families. For example, one prison counsellor spoke of the good work he had done to teach basic parenting skills to a father to avoid repeating his father's mistakes. In addition, people suggested that restorative practice interventions, further support for parents in prison and their children, and assistance for offenders and their families to develop life and work skills were all helpful. This aided them to exit prison with new abilities and interests, and helped them to rebuild their lives within the community. One victim of domestic violence stated,

*I love the fact that for the last six months we have been receiving vegetables every week from the prison, grown by the men in prison. I would like to see more things like that, where people are doing something productive ... Compensation for their crimes, I guess. We need to find more productive and constructive ways for people to give back to the community after damaging lives and hearts. I would like to see more of this.*

### Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

ACC is a service designed to provide comprehensive, no-fault personal injury cover for all New Zealand residents and visitors to New Zealand. This means that people be able to apply for ACC help, no matter how they got injured, or whose fault it was. ACC help includes a wide range of services – from payment towards treatment or counselling, help around the home while people get better, and/or assistance with people's income if they can't work because of their injury. A number of people who talked to the Inquiry commented positively about the assistance ACC provided in terms of helping them to access counselling.

*After being raped by my ex-partner, ACC covered the counselling costs. The access to counselling was really helpful and helped me to deal with my childhood abuse and the cycle of domestic violence I had been in. My counsellor was amazing.*

Many people talked about the importance of counselling for sensitive ACC claims, insisting that it helped them to understand their abuse and explore strategies to help them move forward. They also commented on how grateful they were that ACC covered 80% of the costs for counselling. However, many participants felt that the limited number of ACC-supported sessions and the payment of 20% of the counselling fees was stressful. A good ACC counsellor was reported to be consistent, professional and empathetic. One person who had experienced a violent rape described the importance of her counsellor.

*“I doubt I would be where I am today if I had not done the counselling [ACC sensitive claim counselling] I did, the work I did during those sessions. My counsellor was there to work at every session and so was I. She taught me about PTSD and the impact the abuse had had on me – normalising the many struggles I was having in relation to the abuse. This helped me over time to stop blaming myself, and to give myself some compassion for the present struggle with depression. It gave me the opportunity to heal, which over time I did.”*



## Summary

- People who are genuine, non-judgmental, and committed to supporting those affected by child abuse and domestic violence have a positive influence on their lives.
- Helpful services respond readily, encourage engagement, focus clearly on the needs of the individual or group, and incorporate whole family support.
- Helpful services also offer safe places to talk, emotional and moral support, and teach coping skills.
- When agencies work together collaboratively, the experience for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence is much more positive.
- Information-sharing and relationships are critical for effective inter-agency collaboration.
- Teachers who are alert to troubled children and believe children who disclose child abuse or violent home situations, make a real difference in their lives and help to keep them safe.
- Police attitudes and responsiveness to victims of abuse and domestic violence have improved noticeably in recent times.





# SECTION 3

## *What's not working well*



# SECTION 3: What's not working well

*“If there had been proper care and attention given to my mother she could've turned into a wonderful person, she could've turned into a great mother, I could've had a great life with her, or with my father.”*

While the Inquiry's key aim was to focus on what works and to identify what would be an ideal system, it was important for those speaking to us to share what had not worked for them. To honour the people's stories fully and learn from their negative experiences, this section of *The People's Report* describes what didn't work for the people who came forward. People identified characteristics of people who were difficult to work with and key areas requiring attention. What didn't work also covers aspects of the various organisations that people came into contact with in their child abuse and/or domestic violence journeys: the Police, Courts, Child Youth and Family, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Women's Refuge, community organisations, education providers, and health providers.

## Characteristics of People Who Make Things Difficult

While most people who talked to the Inquiry repeatedly identified the characteristics of those people who made a positive difference for them, they also identified those frontline workers, neighbours, friends and family members who made their experiences difficult. These frontline workers, neighbours, friends or family members were reported to treat victims of abuse poorly,

making assumptions and being judgmental, rather than treating them as people. These people lacked knowledge about child abuse and domestic violence and its effects – for instance, the impacts of child abuse and domestic violence on mental health, or women lacking resources when leaving a dangerous relationship. People told the Inquiry these people were generally ignorant, arrogant, controlling, bureaucratic, and prejudiced. In addition, they often took moralistic standpoints that led to them making judgments about both victims and perpetrators. The Glenn Inquiry heard that some frontline workers, neighbours, friends or family members were paternalistic, treating those seeking help like “naughty children”.

## Key Areas Requiring Attention

### It's not okay

- Why don't you care that I'm hurting inside?*
- That being treated as less than, injures my pride.*
- I deserve to be heard, the law's on my side.*
- So why when I need help, do you run and hide?*
- It's not okay, or so the ads say.*
- So why does the bully have everything his way?*
- Why does the victim have to fight?*
- Why don't seemingly good people do what is right?*
- Don't dismiss me just because you can.*
- Don't disregard me just 'cause I'm not a man.*

Ignorant  
I Know Best  
Prejudiced  
Judgments Bureaucratic  
Treat As Naughty Children Controlling  
Unproven Impressions  
Paternalistic Act On Assumptions  
Not Treated As Person  
Lack Knowledge  
Arrogant  
Moralistic

A woman who spoke to the Glenn Inquiry presented the poem, *It's not okay*. It depicts the difficulty that victims have in getting the support and attention they need. Most people (victims, perpetrators, families and those working with them) spoke about a number of areas requiring attention in the current system. Key areas identified included:

- inadequate funding
- poor inter-agency collaboration
- a lack of rights and a forum to address these
- New Zealand's drinking culture, and
- the need for education at multiple levels.

For many, these are barriers to addressing child abuse and domestic violence at a family level and as a country. Without paying serious attention to these areas, little progress will be made to improve the responses and address New Zealand's child abuse and domestic violence problem. This section deals with service-related issues, and then goes on to discuss those things that relate to it at a societal level.

## Funding

*We need moral leadership from all politicians, community leaders, people in people service industries, and parents and grandparents. All these people must believe in the value of a caring and safe society. Not a selfish, overly profit-orientated society. It needs to be people-centred. People must matter more than money. If the Government cannot pay, then it has to be the collective local community. But this requires moral leadership and role-modelling by all leaders.*

The availability of funding for victims to leave abusive and violent homes often makes the difference between many deciding to stay or leave. This is particularly important because many victims have also experienced financial abuse causing them

to have insufficient or no access to money. As a result, funding rent for a home and paying for food and power for themselves and their children is impossible.

*Because of the inadequate availability of services, [and] the particularly vulnerable position of any abused women and children who do not have family to help them, financially and in all other ways, [ it often] makes it impossible to leave the abusive relationship and manage the many pressures of establishing a new life.*

Compounding lack of funding is the fact that most people needing to access benefits were unaware that the WINZ six-week stand-down period for the Domestic Purposes Benefit could be waived.

Given the enormity of New Zealand's child abuse and domestic violence problem and the persistent effects on victims and perpetrators, it is important that strategies and programmes to address these problems are adequately resourced.

*“Our ability as a whole system and as an agency to respond effectively to crisis is really important. To support people to overcome family violence, requires a range of different resources and support over time.”*

We heard from a range of people including victims, perpetrators, non-government organisations and community groups that funding to address child abuse and domestic violence was inadequate and generally based on short-term contracts. Apart from the instability short-term funding causes, it was difficult for these organisations to plan comprehensive and sustainable services. In fact, most frontline workers who talked about community-based organisations said they were only partially funded by government contracts, and some received no government funding at all.

Consequently, staff at many community-based organisations offering programmes for those affected by child abuse and domestic violence, are taken away from the delivery of programmes to spend great amounts of time writing applications for funding from charitable organisations.

*So I do think that our team on the whole, can do a really good job. My biggest problem is being able to pay the staff, and to get the best, to get more people.*

They also relied on volunteers to help deliver their services. It was clear from frontline workers that programmes supporting victims and perpetrators of child abuse and domestic violence must be adequately and sustainably funded. However, contracts for services were often between 6-12 months in length. Community and non-government organisations told us that inadequate funding and short-term contracts were major issues for them when planning and delivering programmes for victims and perpetrators of child abuse and domestic violence. Extensive amounts of time were spent by these organisations applying for money from philanthropic and charitable organisations to continue their services. Other providers stated that competitive funding creates territorialism and patch protection, deterring organisations working together for the benefit of people.

Another resource issue is the availability and affordability of counselling for those affected by child abuse and domestic violence. Many victims of child abuse and/or domestic violence told the Inquiry that counselling was valuable for addressing their trauma, and enabled them to lead relatively productive lives. Perpetrators also needed access to long-term counselling. One person talked about the value of counselling.

*“I am on my fourth lot of ACC counselling that has been very helpful. So to be able to avail myself of that has been really cool. It's like peeling an onion, another layer comes off and you think, oh bother I thought I was done with that, and you've got to go off and do it again. But I feel like this time is probably the last time that I will be taking help from ACC. Along the way when I was about nineteen, I was very violently raped, and had never disclosed that until about two weeks ago with my ACC counsellor.”*

However, many people said they had difficulty finding a counsellor who was effective, and the funding of counselling sessions was a major issue. Those who qualified for ACC-sensitive claims counselling often found the number of approved sessions inadequate to deal with the complexity of their needs. In addition, the 20% top-up (if they qualified for ACC support) or paying counsellors' fees in full was often difficult, if not impossible. Most people spoke about not qualifying for funded counselling, leaving them paying full fees or going without counselling because they were unable to afford it. The reality is that child abuse and/or domestic violence means victims and perpetrators often have a lifetime of trauma that can not be solved with short-term solutions such as six paid counselling sessions.

*I'm no longer in counselling. I've been out of counselling for two years now. Yeah, I did six years. Yeah, it's a long haul. And that's not to say that I'm 100% okay. I still have my down days but I do a lot more for myself now.*

## Lack of Inter-agency Collaboration

*There's no over-arching New Zealand strategy, it seems to me, across all the sectors – family violence is part of health, education, social services. Because it's all just operating in its little silos, it feels like there's just a great deal of inefficiency in that approach. If there was some kind of an over-arching strategy where people could see how they fitted together, it would hopefully address some of that bitsiness in the sector.*



Many people spoke about a widespread lack of inter-agency collaboration in New Zealand. Working better together was seen as essential for achieving positive outcomes for families. Community frontline workers spoke about needing to work with non-government and government agencies. Yet, time and again the Inquiry heard from victims, perpetrators and frontline workers that numerous organisations and agencies did not work well together, communicate with one another, or share information. This left those seeking help and support ill-informed, confused, or feeling lost in the chasms between the silos. When various organisations and agencies – government, non-government and community – involved in child abuse and domestic violence work in isolation, it makes it difficult for people and families under stress, especially those in crisis situations, to navigate them. People spoke about getting the “run around” when they needed help, especially when agencies did not communicate and work together.

*“There’s no support, I cut myself off from my family because that was the safer option. So the only places left to go are government agencies and they don’t want to know. You end up in Mental Health, or Family Court, CYFS, Birthright, because they’re busy. They don’t want to know, they’ve got ten minutes and that’s it, you can get out the door.”*

The outcome is that no one accepts responsibility or supports people needing help, who consequently become frustrated, as the following mother explains.

*“When my daughter was fourteen, she was in a bad way. I knew what was going on, so I rang her headmistress, and I said, “I have a fourteen year-old daughter that’s contemplating suicide, can you please help?” “I can’t talk to you, talk to the school counsellor.” So I talked to the school counsellor, and I said, “[Daughter’s Name] is in a bad way, she’s trying to attempt suicide, and she’s thinking about suicide, can you please help?” And I told him the drama, she wasn’t living at home, the Police had removed her, because there had been a huge argument and we had no food. Anyway, because the Police were involved, the school counsellor said, “No, ring the Police.” Now this was at the end of January. In December I had rung CYFS and said, “Can you please help, because [Daughter’s Name]’s behaviour is out of control?” They said, “We can refer you to Birthright.” So I rang Birthright in December and they said, “I’m sorry, we can’t help you, because we’re not taking any referrals until February. Ring back then.” So by the time I got to the Policeman, who was the third one in half an hour who said, “No sorry, can’t help.” The Policeman said to me, “Ring Birthright.” And I lost it, I screamed down the phone, “No, I have a fourteen year-old daughter that wants to commit suicide, and I’m being given the run around by all these freaking agencies.” So they rang CYFS. She’s now in CYFS care, and I have an anger management problem.”*

The current competitive funding environment limits opportunities for inter-agency collaboration. This was referred to as a policy issue driven by the market model used for funding services. People described this approach as “crazy” for use in the social sector because it discouraged agencies, including government agencies, from working together.

### Communication and Information-Sharing

*Organisations involved with children should be required to undertake child protection training in partnership with other agencies. Organisations involved with children should be required to show evidence of cross-agency collaboration.*

As well as lack of collaboration, poor inter-agency communication was also identified as a major issue. People frequently spoke about inaccurate, inadequate (sub-standard) or missing documentation relating to their individual situations, whether it was related to a violent incident or some other event. What made this worse were uncorrected inaccuracies and inadequate documentation that remained as “evidence” going into the future. Victims told the Inquiry that this was often to their disadvantage.

*CYFS reporting is really substandard, and terribly upsetting. I felt like I was going nowhere for a long time and I was just asking them for any direction about what to do next. What they did is – I found later when some of the documents turned up in the huge pile of documents from court – they'd been doodling while I cried and the doodles were still on the paper, which is really unprofessional.*

One woman describes the difficulty getting an incident onto Police records.

*“Because I believe he is likely to follow through on his threats, I wanted there to be legal documentation of my side of the encounter. I was advised by my local CAB, who were equally horrified, to make a statutory declaration, which I submitted to the court to be considered with my protection order and put on file, so that if and when he did something, I had spoken with someone about it and had it registered with them officially. I was refused. The woman at the desk eventually said she would scan it onto my computer file, which she did, I suspect to placate me and get rid of me. I am understandably upset at them for losing his file for three months. Consequently, by the time it was found and my reapplication to the court for the anger management to be reinstated was ordered, he had left his only known address and so cannot be served. I am supposed to give them his address. Apparently the Family Court cannot get information from WINZ, why not? Why can't IRD and WINZ swap more personal information?”*

Other people talked about inaccuracies in Child Youth and Family and legal documentation.

*“Guess what, I was sent someone else's private information too. The lawyer who said I was a vague lady sent me a thirty page document which I never received, emailed to me some other poor family's horrible experience and I read some of it, because at first I thought it was for me. It was the same lawyer.”*

*“In my CYFS file, they have a thing that says, that over nine, ten, fifteen years now, I have had various CYFS involvement, and that's what they put before the court. Not anywhere in that do they state that none of that involvement was because I abused my children. The minute the judge sees there's various CYFS involvement, it's interpreted that I have abused my children,*

and that's not the way it is. What it is, [Son's Name] lived with his dad for a while, and his dad was abusing him, so the minute I found out I rang CYFS and I said, "Do something about it." And they said, "You just go and steal him." And I said, "No, I've been down that path before, you get him out of there, and we'll go through the court system, and you can put him in my custody." And that's exactly what they did. So I was seen as a fit parent by CYFS, but nowhere do they put that in the file."

The Glenn Inquiry also heard of instances when existing documentation was not read.

*That's the key question. If the judge said, "Hang on, what you're requesting is illegal, let's have another look at this, what's going on here?" My heart tells me I don't think the judge read the documents. I think he just stamped it, signed it and then on with the next case. I don't think anyone actually read what was put out there.*

Documentation labelling victims and perpetrators was also seen by frontline workers as unhelpful. At times it artificially split services, and promoted frontline worker responses based on stereotypes. Consequently, the unique needs of some victims and perpetrators could become invisible. Sometimes people simply need more help navigating the system and accessing necessary resources. The following Police officer describes how he used the relationships he had with other organisations to get a woman and her children heating.

*"I went around to see her and it was June, so it's cold. It was a cold morning, and she said, "Oh, I haven't lit the fire because I've only got enough wood for a morning. CYFS are coming round tomorrow morning, so I want to make sure when they're here the house is warm." So I said, "Are you serious?" She said, "Yep."*

*So I said, "Light the fire." I went around to WINZ and spoke to them. I said: "This girl needs firewood and she needs it now, can you help her?" Got onto it, she burnt firewood and we got firewood for her the next day. But that's their thinking – because he's [ex-partner] not there to get the firewood or whatever, she doesn't know how to."*

Besides inaccurate or inadequate documentation, information systems were reported to be out-of-date and not used effectively. For instance, people told the Inquiry that addresses were often not updated and orders were either not served or enforced. Information systems and databases appear to be unique to each organisation, and therefore, do not lend themselves to cross-agency sharing of information. In particular, people spoke of problems in the communication and reporting between the Police and Child Youth and Family. This contributed to the distrust that many people have of "helping" organisations.

*CYFS and the Police just seem to be such big structures that individuals get lost. I don't know who they are, I don't trust them. I felt disregarded by the CYFS workers and endangered by Police workers.*

Poor inter-agency collaboration is evident in what some people described as a power imbalance between statutory agencies and non-government organisations, particularly community-based organisations. There was a perception that statutory agency workers, such as Child Youth and Family social workers, often ignored information that frontline workers in non-government and community organisations had, despite their child abuse and/or domestic violence expertise.

*Power and control: There is still massive power and control dynamics existing between funders and agencies, MSD and government and community agencies and between agencies. These are deep rooted and affect how individuals and agencies interact. There needs to be more equality between government and community agencies.*

*Being an NGO we had no mandate to discuss things with others. At a later date I was meeting at the local hospital and was able to see the files of the family which showed regular visits to A & E for injuries to the children, and reasons for the injuries were odd. When I discussed this with the nurse, she further looked at the files and said nothing had been forwarded for further investigation. If there was a central file for families then this could have all been pieced together.*

### Confidentiality, Privacy and Safety

Compounding a lack of inter-agency collaboration and information-sharing is the way that issues of safety are adhered to by frontline workers. People talked about the Privacy Act often being used as a reason for agencies not working together, particularly with regard to sharing information. Yet, the Inquiry also heard from people that their confidentiality and privacy were disregarded when it came to information about women's mental health, especially when they were engaging with the courts and lawyers to secure theirs and their children's safety, and when seeking custody. There appeared to be a tendency to be "loose" with information about women's mental health issues and/or help-seeking behaviours. It seemed that women's medical and counselling records were accessible to the courts and their partner's lawyers

in these situations unless they knew to expressly say what they were disclosing was confidential. Moreover, people said they often had inequitable access to relevant documents and application of privacy rules.

*"All the documentation of my finances, they gave to my ex. They won't see me unless I give them this stuff; they gave it to my ex. But under privacy rules, they can give me no information about my ex. They're not allowed to use that documentation in court, but I can actually prove to you where there's no other place they could have got any information from those documents a year later. And the sixth question in court from my ex's lawyer was, "What state are your child support payments up to at this moment?""*

There also appeared to be inadequate documentation and inequitable access to relevant documents, as the following woman shared.

*"I told my Plunket nurse heaps of stuff about what was going on. She was shocked, she was horrified, she was scared for me, she didn't write a single [thing], any of it in her notes. And do you know what? Even if she did I wouldn't be allowed to see it or use it because it all has to be retracted because if there's anything about somebody in the notes, about my ex-husband for example, I don't have access to it, it has to be retracted. It's all cut out so it protects the abuser, because it is his privacy. The use of the privacy act needs to be sorted out so that abusers are not being protected."*

Without doubt, a lack of collaboration between agencies involved in families' lives when they are living with child abuse and domestic violence creates added stress, anxiety and frustration. It prevents more than one organisation effectively interacting with individuals and their family to ensure they are appropriately supported and their needs are met – people expected this when they needed help to be safe.



## No Right of Complaint or Redress

Having no right to complain or seek redress for issues arising when in contact with the organisations supporting people affected by child abuse and domestic violence is a serious issue. Many people, especially victims, talked at length about the things that did not work for them and about being treated poorly when they were in the 'system'. Being treated poorly often related to:

- long, protracted court proceedings
- actions of 'professionals' that compromised people's safety and security
- being portrayed or labelled as "crazy", "mad" or mentally ill, and so forth.

*So for about a year and a half I complained about so many things such as my son coming home with bruises and blood, that kind of thing. But unfortunately, because he's [my ex] got a new partner, they're saying different things from what I'm saying. But at the start of this year, they separated and everything came up that I had been saying, what happened before was still happening during that time. And my son was already sexually abused by the father by the time a psychologist was appointed. So no one listened to me. So that's why I said the system doesn't listen.*

Even when there were 'complaints' processes available, the Inquiry heard that people struggled to get some form of redress, or were unable to address specific issues as the following people indicated.

*"Family Court and CYFS go hand in hand, there's no transparency there, there's no complaints procedures. It's a farce."*

*"So the kids went through five months of daily abuse when they were there, verbally with their dad and his mother, both on at them, badgering them to try and get them to change their story. And they complained to their lawyer that this was going on and she did nothing. And he was supposed to be supervised by his friends and family and wasn't sticking to that either. Kids complained about that. Nothing was done about it. So there is some real failings there, absolutely."*

*"Well I've been told that if you want to make a complaint about the children's lawyer, you can't do that unless she's currently appointed. Even the Police have said to me, this lawyer's not representing your children you need her replaced. But I can't get her replaced unless she's actually appointed. And then are they really going to replace her when they've already appointed her? I don't think so? I can't see it happening. I've contacted the District Law Society. And they said, "If you want to make a complaint about the children's lawyer, you have to make it with the court." And I've already been told by the court that you can't make a complaint unless she's currently appointed. It's a Ferris wheel basically, it goes round and round and round. And I think that's a real hole for children."*

*"I complained about the Lawyer for the Child. I even had things to back me up, but the Family Court is so closed, they didn't want to hear it. I complained about the psychologist, which goes to the Psychologist's Board which is meant to be away from the Family Court. They referred it back to the Family Court."*

People were frequently left disempowered with nowhere to go, especially in situations before the courts. It appears from people's stories that those affected by child abuse and domestic violence had no rights to either complain or have their issues satisfactorily addressed.

## Culture of Drinking

*Alcohol is very close to the heart of New Zealand society.*

New Zealand's laissez faire attitude toward drinking alcohol is strongly linked to violence, as either the cause of violence or a factor in worsening it. Most people told us that this culture of drinking is a major problem facing New Zealanders, and is a barrier to addressing child abuse and domestic violence.

*“Here we are, engaged in this inquiry to establish why child abuse and domestic violence is so high in New Zealand and what can be done about it. And yet, we already know the cause of most of it don't we? Yes we do. One word: alcohol. Why are we doing an inquiry to tell us what we already know? Surely we know? We do, don't we?”*

The link between alcohol, abuse and violence was seen as strong. When both the victim and perpetrator were drunk this was seen by people to be a recipe for disaster, especially when drugs were added to the mix.

*From a young age I witnessed domestic violence. I knew my dad loved my mum but his inability to communicate – and you add some alcohol to that – and up flares the situation.*

*Alcohol and drugs are a really potent mix. They really affect how people react.*

The following woman's story shows how alcohol changed her from being non-violent to abusive. This story also shows the need to have counselling when exiting from a previously abusive relationship.

*“I went from being abused to my new relationship where I am the abuser. And so now I think, he doesn't call the Police on me or anything. I was never a violent person but I am now. There have been numerous times, when alcohol has been involved, and I have become very abusive to this new partner of mine. He actually has scars and vivid memories of nastiness.”*

The Inquiry heard that family environments where alcohol is consumed regularly and excessively appear to be learning grounds for this being acceptable behaviour, similar to violence. The normality of violence in some families' daily lives is reinforced by the apparent social normality and acceptability of excessive alcohol consumption. The ready accessibility and availability of alcohol in places such as supermarkets and bottle stores further entrenches New Zealand's culture of drinking.

*“Alcohol shops in the communities, and the gambling facilities in the community. They're huge, they're all out there in the neighbourhoods.”*

Within the context of child abuse and domestic violence, drinking alcohol is not usually restricted to having fun and getting drunk. Instead it often ends up in partners and children getting hurt in some way, shape or form. In addition to physical and psychological violence inflicted on others, the Glenn Inquiry heard from a number of people that alcohol consumption also leads to poverty and child neglect.

*“When the money goes on alcohol and cigarettes before food and other essentials, poverty follows along with stressed family environments, violence, school absences and so many other unnecessary sad results.”*

*“So we were all very much neglected. We witnessed and grew up with a lot of physical violence in the family, due to my father being an alcoholic.”*

*“I just look at the child abuse stuff and there's not a lot of focus on that particular group of kids which are [abused]. They're only a small group but we know that suicide is higher for them, we know that drug and alcohol use is higher for them as well.”*

People indicated that something needed to happen to address the alcohol (and drug) issues facing New Zealand, particularly its acceptability, accessibility and availability. Addressing this issue is an essential part of solving the child abuse and domestic violence problem in New Zealand.

*You can't get people to stop behaving in this way if you don't address the alcohol and drug issues. If you do not include the alcohol and drug issue in addressing violence and abuse in this country, you're just wasting your time.*

## Lack of Knowledge about Child Abuse and Domestic Violence

It was evident from the people who came forward that there was a general need for tailored education about both child abuse and domestic violence. The persistent existence of stigma and myths reflects a lack of understanding by the general public, victims, perpetrators, and frontline workers, about abuse and violence within families. The following woman's story outlines the extent of the problem.

*If the men who were around me, my Dad, my uncles, elders in the church, or even the Police had believed that what was happening to me and my kids was wrong and spoken up against it, I might not have stayed with my ex-husband for so long. When other men turn away or excuse domestic violence, there is no safe place.*

While the *It's Not OK* social marketing programme has made some impact, further work is needed to extend the public's understanding that:

- child abuse and domestic violence is not okay
- coercion, control and manipulation involved traps victims, and
- it has long-term effects on individuals and families, including its inter-generational transmission.

There is also a need to reduce the stigma and myths that persist. One group stated,

*“The very clear message that we got from the public and from the women that we support, is that the shame and stigma that is so attached to family violence prevents people from seeking help. We need to become much, much, better at projecting images of hope, images of potential, images of possibility, and create platforms for people that have successfully overcome family violence to share their stories as sources of inspiration for others. And that's the fundamental essence behind our support service. It's also the energy now that we bring to all of our messaging within the community and the way in which we seek to establish relationships with people.”*

Educating the public means not only dispelling the myths and stigma attached to being a victim, but clearly stating what is considered to be abusive and violent behaviours.

Obvious within many of the people's stories about their child abuse, was that as children they commonly did not know that the abuse and violence they were living with (including sexual abuse for some) was not normal. The following person recommended that,

*Domestic violence education becomes the norm in schools and kura kaupapa. Don't do it in a way that isolates people or turns them into monsters, but give them a full understanding where they can find that balance and discern when to say something and when it can be dealt with, because our people don't trust the system.*

The Glenn Inquiry heard time and again that it was not until something happened at school that victims learnt that the abuse they were experiencing or the domestic violence that was going on in their homes was not normal. School education made a difference. The following person said.

*Change the cycle. Make sure that I would never abuse. I actually recall being at high school, very early, third maybe fourth form, and I recalled learning something about breaking the cycle, I can't even remember what it was about. I remember learning something and cycling home, and thinking about that, as if something in me was like, "Yeah, I'm not going to carry this on." And so I made a conscious decision to stay at school. I stayed until my seventh form year, and I made all those decisions knowing, this is how I have to break the cycle. I have to be the first of the family to have done something.*

There was a plea by most for education about abuse to begin early, so that both victims and perpetrators of child abuse can get help with their situation. This education should include information about domestic violence, as well as child abuse and neglect.

Education and training was also an issue for people working with victims of child abuse and domestic violence. People need to have confidence that those who provide support, and who are working with them to keep them safe, can do so. Yet, the Inquiry repeatedly heard that many frontline workers, including professionals (such as judges, lawyers, Child Youth and Family workers, social workers, teachers, health professionals, and NGO and community workers) were inconsistent in their approaches and lacked understanding about the dynamics of child abuse and domestic violence. Of particular concern was the lack of knowledge about the coercion and manipulation that is used by perpetrators to maintain secrecy about the abuse and violence they inflict.

*"I've been quite involved with the [Women's Centre] and also been through education programmes to help me cope with what happened to me. I find that there is still a lot that people don't understand. Having been through the system, I can fairly say even the judges have no idea about domestic violence. And I think some of the lawyers as well have no idea how domestic violence operates."*

*"They showed a complete misunderstanding and a lack of professionalism in terms of understanding and protecting young women. A crime had been done, and that deserved some recourse."*

*“I think social workers are badly trained in this country. They don't seem to have any understanding about power and control, they don't seem to be able to look at a woman and realise that not being able to go to work is an abuse. When you feel that you can't go to work because everything you do is being sabotaged by this person in your life, that's abuse. So those social workers need to be trained in what abuse looks like, because it's not just a bash in the face. And they've got to realise that abuse applies to every woman, you know. Just because you're middle upper class, you've got a PhD, you've got money, whatever, it doesn't mean that you cannot be abused and stopped from going to work.”*

*“Judges need to get that domestic violence and child abuse is about power and control and they need to get that just because a woman cries in the stand, it doesn't mean that she's mentally unstable, or whatever.”*

*“But what concerns me here is that these people are supposed to be trained professionals, they're supposed to be social workers. They're supposed to understand children's needs, how children present, they're supposed to understand domestic violence and power of control. But they don't seem to have any understanding of that.”*

*“The Police officer in charge of my case was very nice and sympathetic, but had a lack of education about domestic violence. He once asked me what a girl like me was doing with a guy like him. It made me feel upset that he didn't understand how domestic violence worked. And when I finally had the courage to ring the Police, the senior officer I spoke to at the station was very curt and uninterested. If only the Police had more understanding and education on domestic violence.”*

*“You've just hit a raw nerve. Counsel for Child – wow that's really fascinating! And what blows me away is how it appears that very few lawyers have an understanding of the dynamics of family violence. So you have somebody who's representing the interest of the child, yet has absolutely no idea what this child has been through and witnessed and experienced. And you have a lot of blaming of mothers – you're a hostile mother who's preventing access to the child, you're paranoid – you're all of these things. So very often we have difficulties with the Lawyer for the Child. I would love to see a better education for lawyers. I'm sure they wouldn't want to hear me say that, because they regard themselves as very highly educated. But I would like to see better education for lawyers around the understanding of family violence, the dynamics of it, and how abusive parents can manipulate situations to their own interest, and that very often those proceedings are not in the best interests of the children.”*

Victims often reported feeling abused again when they come into contact with services they needed to interact with to get help. People working in these organisations did not understand child abuse and/or domestic violence. This was particularly true of lawyers and judges in the courts. While the Glenn Inquiry heard that some judges, lawyers and psychologists were exemplary, by far the majority were reported to be at times unprofessional and their actions or inactions contributing to unsafe or dangerous situations.

In addition to general education, specialist training tailored to each discipline is needed to improve practice and make it person-centred.

## Government Organisations

### Police

It was noted by a number of people that most family violence never comes to Police attention. Many people who spoke to the Inquiry had positive comments about more recent interactions with the Police and their responses to child abuse and domestic violence. However, there are areas still needing attention. The Inquiry heard from people about inconsistent responses from Police. The following person summed this up.

*I've had a mixed bag of experiences with [the Police]. Those who've worked on sex crimes I found useful, but overwhelmingly since then their responses have been judgmental ... I wasn't prepared for that, yeah a mixed bag with the Police.*

People reported that some Police officers were unfair, lacked empathy and were callous in the way they reacted to people needing their help. The following concerned neighbour's story highlights Police officers' inaction and lack of empathy:

*The Police [didn't] go and ask the neighbour, "Why did you call us?" ... They didn't talk to that neighbour. And when I phoned them up and said that I had an affidavit they said, "So what, we've closed the case," and I said, "Well I'm going to sue you for negligence if my children are hurt again." And the Police woman laughed at me.*

Another woman talked about the Police only providing a warning to her brother who had sexually abused her in the past. Despite the evidence no charges were laid.

*"And it's so horrible, it's unbelievable ... He made a Police statement and said, "Yes I did it, I did it once, and it was years and years ago." And the Policeman said, "He seems pretty genuine, we'll give him a Police warning." And that was the end of it, despite the fact I've been to Police doctors who had examined me. I've got the reports from the doctors that talk about prolonged sexual activity ... I was having massive doses of antibiotics ... there's only one reason you have that at the time. So I had all this proof that I went to the Police with, [and said] ... "Surely you can't give a Police warning for a sexual thing?" And they said no, they investigated, two Police worked on it for nine or ten months. I had to give a three hour interview, and then they came back ... and said, "Look, he's been given a Police warning, and there's this thing called," I can't remember but it means they can't do somebody twice, and I was like, "But you didn't do him, you just gave him a warning." But they were like, "Nah, we're not going any further.""*

Concerns were also voiced about Police acting on false allegations or not taking any action when people asked for their help. The Inquiry heard from numerous people about being passed from one person to the next and Police officers' attitudes that left them feeling degraded and put down, only for them to eventually say they would do nothing.

After taking some time to gather the courage to write down family violence events and go to the Police, this ex-Police officer was passed from one person to another. Her complaint was not acted on because, she thought, it was "historic". She was shattered with this outcome:

*"So I wrote down what had happened to me and then I thought I'd go to the Police. I used to be a Police Officer, so it was hard to face people 'cause you feel ashamed ... [pause] ... I took a long time to even get in there ... I phoned up and they kind of mucked me around and passed me to this person, passed*

me to that person. So eventually I got assigned to someone in [area removed] ... I got to the stage of doing a video interview ... and I told them my whole story 'cause I'd written everything down so everything would be in order and also I had some ACC numbers from injuries ... and ... some photographs of injuries I had. And they came back to me and said, "We're not doing anything about it." And I just couldn't believe it. I thought they know me, I was a good Police Officer. They wouldn't do anything about it, I was just shattered. And I just didn't have the strength to carry on with it."

Enormous courage was needed for many to seek help from the Police. People also told the Inquiry that the way Police interacted with them as children and young people damaged their image of, and trust in, the Police. Consequently, as adults they were reluctant to ask for help or engage with Police.

Often people's stories were about some Police officers' lack of action regarding breaches of protection orders, evidential interviewing, and historical abuse cases. There was a perception in these situations that Police were avoiding the paperwork when they responded to incidents.

*There was an incident ... I actually called the Police a number of times. Initially I had only a trespass notice. He [ex-partner] came to my house – bang, bang, bang. I called the Police. The Police came over. They spoke to us ... but in the end they did nothing because their conclusion is that we're just having a domestic... despite the fact that he's not supposed to be there and he was scaring me and my kids. And yet the Police were more convinced listening to him that he's supposed to see my son, that kind of thing. That I'm just overreacting.*

Another person talked of Police not enforcing her protection order against her abusive brother when her mother was dying in hospital.

*"Police refused to remove him from my dying mother's hospital bedside, despite my protection order in place and him being the one who should leave to secure my safety. Both the Police and hospital reinforced his bullying behaviour. I had even said he could stay in the room, as long as there was a security guard present. But they didn't want him getting arrested ... The Police pick and choose whether to act on a complaint about a breach of protection order. If I want to challenge the Police on the matter ... I have to make a statement and a complaint for it to be investigated ... It is not my job to protect myself and enforce the law, it is theirs. Indeed, if I were to take the law into my own hands, they would punish me."*

Some Police inaction or refusal to act on protection orders appears to stem from inadequate training. This was evident in people's stories about some Police officers lacking an appreciation of the dynamics of domestic violence, engaging in victim-blaming and not understanding the potential seriousness of victims' situations. Generally, victims reported having real and serious concerns about their safety, and for some their life. It took a lot of courage for them to call the Police. The following is an example of Police attending an incident and simply concluding it was a "he says, she says" situation, and refusing to do anything.



*Despite my requests to go with the Police to make a statement due to the threats and vile abuse I encountered, they refused. They said it was a case of 'he said she said', and even likened my situation to family squabbles. I beg to differ. I would have thought the fact that there had been a recent arrest warrant out for him for breaching a trespass notice, would sway them in my favour – not so, apparently.*

Liaison within divisions of the Police and with external agencies, like Child Youth and Family, was also reported to be poor. People told the Inquiry these liaisons were difficult and inconsistent, and there was a perception that Police referred families to “favoured” organisations. This will be explored further under the section on inter-agency collaboration.

### The Courts – Dysfunctional and Broken

*“I just found the extraordinary process of having to fight for my dignity, my sanity and my ability as a mother in the court process just so harrowing and really frightening. To realise that other people are going through the court without the privilege of education that I have and that I only just got through.”*

Within the context of child abuse and domestic violence, one of the most striking things across most people’s stories is the overwhelming agreement that the court system is “dysfunctional” and “broken”. A wide range of people had something to say about the court system – victims, perpetrators, those working within it, and other supporting agencies and services interacting with the courts. Those who spoke to the Inquiry about the court system generally referred to the Family, District and High Courts together, and more specifically about the Family Court. Rather than help sort out their safety and other related issues, the courts were perceived as the cause of added burdens for those living and working with child abuse and domestic violence.

Of particular concern was the poor communication between the different courts that led to incidents of assault, for instance, being addressed separately – that is, incidents were not linked to prior or successive incidents of child abuse and domestic violence. We also heard from many people that the Family Court was perceived to be biased – either against men or against women. However, overall it was women (victims) who struggled most within the court system in terms of financial burdens, prolonged processes and having to prove their situation.

*He hates me. He was on a crusade to make me an unbalanced mother. At the family group conference I was told by the counsellor that we had, that we should just get back together, we were working, we were doing everything right. That Lawyer for the Child leaned in to him and said, “That woman’s got problems.”*

It was not unusual for perpetrators to “play the system”, to be seen to be more believable, and not be held accountable for their behaviours. The following woman provides an example of the difficulties that victims encounter.

*I was treated with attitude, because I was surprised and unhappy that he now didn’t have to do his anger management. I even heard sighing in the background while I was on the phone and my query was being addressed. If people like him refuse to do anger management, what hope is there of change in attitude or behaviour and rehabilitation?*

Without doubt, poor communication within the courts was seen to help perpetrators avoid responsibility for their actions.



Many who talked to the Glenn Inquiry said they were trapped in a system offering little or no protection. Securing their safety so they could get on with their lives depended on the burden of proof victims were required to produce. Many argued that the burden of proof should lie with the perpetrator. The following woman's story highlights the no-win situation many victims find themselves in when trying to get legal help to stop harassment, stalking, and other activities that disrupt their safety and daily lives.

*"Just this morning I went into the Police station and tried to say, 'I'm sick of the constant text messages. I'm sick of the swearing. I'm sick of him coming near me, he's not meant to be doing that.' But they have it hand in hand with the order. So they say 'go back to the Family Court.' But him having an order to see his daughter does not give him the right to swear at me and come near me and be a horrible person. But they can't do anything about it. The system's so flawed it's not funny. And they think, since he hasn't hit me or anything like that for years, I mean he used to do that years ago. Since he hasn't done that and it's my word against his, I can't go anywhere. I can't do anything. No one will help me."*

Victims told the Inquiry that they relied on judges', lawyers' and psychologists' support for their safety and for resolving issues in a timely manner, but assistance and support was lacking for many. It was not unusual for people to be in the court system for long periods of time (up to six years in some cases). The influence of a single "bad" judge, lawyer or psychologist could have huge and long-lasting effects for victims and perpetrators. Simply put, the court system structure and processes, and the people working within it, re-victimise and re-traumatise victims seeking help with their safety and that of their children. The following person's story reflected many stories we heard about how the court system could not be challenged. In many cases, the reality was that the protection orders they fought hard for to ensure they and their children would remain safe, was in fact an illusion of safety.

*Our legal system is very black and white. There are the rules, this is the way it is, and there is a reluctance to challenge ... I've learnt that. You get told that parenting orders and other orders written, you get told this by the Police, they're not worth the paper they're written on. And you learn even protection orders are not worth the paper they're written on. They're only a piece of paper. They're not gonna protect you.*

There was much criticism of the court system, especially the confrontational or adversarial approach used. The onus of having to prove complaints or incidents lay with victims and not perpetrators. A common belief held by people was that it is about the powerful and rich against those without power or money. The system was seen as often biased toward perpetrators, especially those who had money, networks and respect within communities. It was not just those who were "brown and poor" that had difficulties.

*The judiciary seriously need some training and understanding in the dynamics around domestic violence and the control and the manipulation that occurs. Judges need to appreciate just how vulnerable you are by the time you reach the court system - that vulnerability needs to be treated with respect and it's not.*

We also heard from many Pākehā women from high or middle socioeconomic backgrounds, struggling to secure safety because their partners were wealthy and well-connected. In their view, it was the perpetrators' interests that were well served by the court system. Perpetrators used this power to totally disempower these women, leaving them without any money, homes and other resources necessary to rebuild a new life.

Many of those coming forward talked about actions arising from court processes that increased their level of risk, made worse by often slow and drawn-out processes. Not only was this stressful, but it also created massive financial and emotional burdens for victims who often had very little in the way of resources, pushing them and their children into lives of poverty. A great concern is that the courts' adversarial approach contributes to lengthy proceedings, forcing victims to have continued engagement with the perpetrator of their abuse and violence. For instance, traumatised victims were forced to stand in an open court and tell their stories in front of the perpetrator.

### *Increasing Risks to Safety*

Another complaint was that the psychological abuse that victims and children had endured for many years did not appear to be taken into account by anyone working in the courts.

*It was very hard to get a discourse going about the psychological abuse of me and my child throughout the whole time. The court and various other organisations find it difficult to identify the psychological abuse that goes on around a sexual abuse case. They think, "We can't go there, that's not going to go anywhere." There's that tendency.*

In many cases perpetrators had threatened victims and their children's safety, and sometimes their lives.

Another clear message was that mediation and counselling requirements, when going through the Family Court system, were perceived as ineffective. People told us that mediation and counselling:

- ignores the silencing effect of psychological abuse that victims have suffered, often for many years
- requires both parties to be willing to work anything out, and

- requires perpetrators to take responsibility for their abuse and complete effective treatment for their abuse and violence.

Indeed, relationship counselling was viewed not to work when perpetrators had not sorted their violence out.

People also told the Inquiry that shared care was often a preferred option by the Family Court. Yet, one parent's abuse and inability to care for children, and the children's age and their specific needs did not seem to be taken into account. Lawyers representing the child's interests were often seen not to uphold their best interests, as the following front line worker comments.

*Very few Lawyers for the Child have an understanding of the dynamics of family violence. So you have somebody who's representing the interest of the child, yet has absolutely no idea what it means, what this child has been through and witnessed and experienced.*

Decisions made within the Family Court have consequences when not carefully thought through. The Inquiry repeatedly heard about a tension that exists between protection orders, designed to protect victims and their children, and access orders that promote relationships between perpetrators of abuse and violence and their children. However, an access order carries with it significant potential dangers for victims and their children. The Inquiry also heard that supervised access was a problem, particularly when access arrangements were not practical and often relied on the abuser's family or friends who did not always comply with the access conditions. The following woman's account typifies the consequences that lead to further violence for victims when they hand children over to the other parent.

*“The judge thinks it’s all wonderful because everything’s working out ... but of course you’re still dealing with the same person. And she thinks he’s [ex-partner] been really great and humble and he lets you have his rental for you to come and stay in with your children. So he’ll move out over that weekend, he’ll go away to [another place], right? So that was the deal, that was what was happening and I was going to use the car, my car it was, it’s still registered my car that he drives around anyway. So this [she was assaulted by her ex-partner in her car and surrounded by three other people during the handover of the children] is happening in front of my children. When I got out of the car, so I’m on the other side of town, I’m having to make myself walk all the way back. I ring the Police. They say, “Stay where you are.” I said, “I don’t think so. I’m not staying in that situation. I’m getting as far away from it as humanly possible.” I didn’t know it but my daughter had then run off in desperation trying to look for me. They ran her down in the car, like they got in their cars and ran, blocked her all in. So yeah, this is the Family Court. This is the Family Court setting these situations up. And now when the Police came to interview me they said, “Unfortunately we couldn’t do anything because he’s got three independent witnesses who have a different story.” I said, “They’re not independent witnesses, they’d been organised by him, so how can they be independent?” So that’s a failing. The other thing was the Police said to me, “Why on earth did you put yourself in that situation?” [laughter] And I said, “Well you need to speak to the judge about that one, ‘cause she thought it was a brilliant idea.””*

This woman went on to highlight the real risks for victims when decisions made by the courts are not carefully thought through.

*It’s not hard to understand how women end up dead. I can see it so clearly. I know what goes on, I know how it happened, and it was all set up by the Family Court because they set it all in motion. Instead of saying [to him] “Behave, and be a man, be a decent father to your children and set the example.”*

Another problem victims reported was forcing their children to go to the other parent’s house in order to meet the access agreements, when they clearly did not want to go.

*He was having immense anxiety problems. He had aches, tummy aches, didn’t want to go to school, I was having to pull him out from under the bed on a Monday morning because he didn’t want to go to his dad’s. I went there [Family Court], I went there twice, but once dad’s involved and he’s saying, “He’s not a problem at my house, it’s all in the mother’s head.” Then the Family Court takes a step backwards because they do not want to be involved.*

### **Flawed Processes**

In addition to living with the consequences of court decisions, people complained that they had no way of challenging decisions and processes. The Family Court, in particular, was seen to be “closed” to complaints, with ineffective systems to deal with them. People told the Inquiry that Family Court officials did not want to hear about complaints and defended those working within the system.

The Inquiry heard of problems with reports and other documentation produced within the Family Court. These were often inaccurate and flawed, with no mechanism for correcting or challenging the inaccuracies. There were also numerous accounts of reports that were not taken into consideration. The following person, who was forced into representing herself, discovered documents were changed and she was unable challenge or question this.

*“There is no real system for challenging the authority of a judge. And there should be, because they are only human beings at the end of the day ... even when they do the transcript of those bloody things, the judge, she eliminates some of her stuff. So not all of her words were actually transcribed, right? And then they used a word ... I'm not very wordy, right? I'm terrible, I need a thesaurus all the time, my dictionary ... and they used a word, when I read the transcript ... and I thought, “How the hell did I answer that? I don't even know what that means.” I had to look it up in a dictionary and go, “What the hell?” And then the next line after, it was the same word again ... I could not understand what was being asked of me. I would've asked “I'm sorry, I don't understand.” I would not have given an answer if I did not understand what the question was. But there it was on the transcript, how can that be? And even her comment's deleted.”*

Many people also told the Inquiry how being involved in the court system further increased their stress. If victims were seen to show emotions, be sad or depressed, then they were portrayed as “crazy” or “mentally unstable” by defence lawyers, lawyers for the children, psychologists and those working in the system. This meant that some avoided showing any emotion or seeking help for health problems. Yet, emotions, depression and being sad could be considered normal after living for long periods of time in unpredictable and dangerous homes, where their safety was often under threat. The following

person told how she quickly learnt to use language carefully and not share her feelings after being framed as “crazy”.

*“Because if you say to a counsellor that you feel depressed and you haven't confirmed confidentiality, then in court you are mentally unstable and you're not suitable to have custody. And it's the same with the Police or anybody ... Now nobody going through this kind of situation is going to go through it without feeling sad or hurt, or scared, or stressed. And especially not, if you've got somebody who is determined to drive you crazy and prove that you're crazy in court. Especially not, if they employ a barrister who's famous for driving people crazy, and proving that they're crazy in court. So how do you go through without feeling a little bit crazy? But I quickly learnt that I wasn't going to use any of that language, whether it was with my doctor, or the school, or even one of my friends”*

Indeed, the act of seeking help for depression was commonly believed to be used against parents in the Family Court, and was used to label them as “unfit”, rather than being responsible by attending to their health and wellbeing. Many people talked about needing to be credible in court which required them to appear confident, strong and unemotional. This was described by one person as having to have a “sort of chauvinism” despite their lives falling apart around them. It was not only victims reporting that the court system was stressful. The following perpetrator also talked about how the court system put him under more stress and added to the potential for him to become more aggressive.

*“First, let's be really clear. I committed domestic violence, there's no doubt about that, right? So I got arrested for male versus female assault, got reduced to assault and then I got discharged without conviction. That was how the process went ... Going through this court case, adjournment, bail conditions, blah, blah, blah, it put even more stress on me as a person. So if I were led to be reacting in an aggressive way under stress, the system places you under even more stress. So it's not surprising that there are then problems under bail conditions, especially if things like access to the children is limited.”*

While people indicated the court system should improve the safety for victims (both adults and children), in reality the Inquiry heard numerous accounts of how victims' safety was compromised and their risk for further abuse and violence increased. Obvious in people's stories was the seemingly high threshold for taking action on breaches of court orders or directives, not followed up by judges.

*Apparently women usually rely on lawyers to apply for a protection order. There is a reason for that, it is made very difficult. Lawyers are not well informed and kept giving contradictory information. It took six or seven visits for me to get it right and completed and submitted and was a very frustrating process ... The protection order states I am supposed to be notified of any variances to it and have input about that. That is not possible when the courts fail to contact you.*

### *Legal Aid*

People indicated that legal aid was a particular area that did not work in their best interests, and that frequently people were unable to access it. Instead, they had to seek the assistance of a private lawyer at great cost. People unable to pay a lawyer's costs were forced into self-representation – a process many claimed was not user-friendly. Those using legal aid found the initial \$50 fee was difficult to afford, especially when they were seeking assistance with their safety from a violent partner and facing the costs associated with leaving a family home. Often victims had limited or no access to personal finances, especially when partners had been using coercive control tactics that included financial abuse. There were strongly-held beliefs that legal aid lawyers frequently did not:

- put time into cases they accepted
- always understand the complexities of the case, and
- explain to their clients the processes they could expect.

People believed that, similar to private lawyers, incentives existed for legal aid lawyers to prolong cases rather than seek timely resolutions.

### *People Working in the Courts*

The Inquiry heard how people were forced onto the court's "roller coaster" with no control over the process or the outcomes. Frequently criticism was directed at those involved in the court system, but mainly judges, lawyers and psychologists. The following example shows the manipulation that exists within the court system – in this case the setting of an appeal date.

*His lawyer said, "If it is heard on this date, then I'm happy for it to go." 'Cause they all have to agree or something. The judge has to agree for it to go to appeal ... they all have to, it's just bizarre. And I said to my lawyer at the time, I said, "There's something wrong with that. Why is it done on a certain date? You soon realise ... because that particular Court, you know, [the] judge is meek and mild, and they manipulate them. So this is a world that you kind of have to get exposed to. You don't want to be exposed, you don't want to even have bloody any part of it, but you're thrown in the middle of it and you can't escape.*

Many people reported that court officials had little or no understanding of domestic violence, especially the psychological violence that is frequently involved in child abuse and domestic violence. The following person is just one of many who spoke to the Inquiry about the general lack of understanding about domestic violence. This was based not only on personal experiences, but also observations of others going through the 'system'.

*"I've been through the system [and] I can fairly say even the judges have no idea about domestic violence. And I think some of the lawyers as well ... they have no idea how domestic violence operates. And unfortunately when I've also been through the jury system, I can see the majority of people don't understand the dynamics of domestic violence. I think people still have a preconceived idea of what domestic violence is. They have this idea that if you say you are a victim of domestic violence, it means that you have these bruises or you have to be hiding somewhere or you are this kind of woman that just like men that particular way, and that you belong to this particular group."*

An overwhelming number of people told how their domestic violence was treated as "a game" by lawyers, who unnecessarily lengthened court proceedings for what appeared to be their own benefit.

*The lawyers in this whole system seemed to benefit from dragging it out and then turning it back around onto the parents and saying the parents are dragging it out. It was horrific, you know. Just getting arrangements for a child to see their father took weeks and then one lawyer would say I was messing around and he was messing around. After a while we worked out, we weren't messing each other around – it was the lawyers and it was just shameful.*

Many people said that the driving force and incentive for lawyers was money and that it was in their best interests to prolong cases. Unnecessary delays made many victims' lives more difficult, especially when their ex-partners were able to afford the "best" lawyers and lengthy court proceedings, while they had little or no resources and were often forced into debt, legal aid or self-representation. There was a general belief that victims having to represent themselves would not attend court hearings because of the psychological abuse many of them have suffered. The following woman gives just one example of the difficulty victims have in getting timely help from a lawyer.



*And I called my lawyer ... I'd seen her once and she said everything was fine. But I hadn't been able to get her on the phone the whole week before this social worker came. I didn't really know where I stood legally, whether she had all the information from the past, or whether she was going to help me. I told her to call CYFS and get their approval - I'm not trying to hide anything. And so after the social worker left I was on the phone, I said, "I demand to speak to my lawyer this time. I want her reassurance. I want to find out." And she's finally on the phone and says, "No you're obviously doing everything right and if they're going to take your child or anything, or your husband they're going to have to write this special document, and we will just attach all the counselling that you're doing to this thing, you'll be fine."*

Another woman talked about how her lawyer made an access agreement with no consideration of the protection order that existed.

*"I fired my first lawyer, she was useless. I got this protection order [also covers her daughter] and I thought, well now I know you're [ex-partner] meant to have supervised access. And he got every second weekend and Wednesday night for dinner and all this crap, but of course I thought I had to give him all of that ... She said he could come to my house and pick her up, pick my daughter up. I wanted to meet him at a mall, somewhere public where he couldn't accuse me of things or have a big fuss, but she said he could come to my house and pick her up and I had to drop her off ... Yeah, she ignored my protection order completely ... I can't even make a complaint because no one listens, no one follows through with it. So she just ignored it [protection order] as if it didn't exist."*

The court system's Lawyer for the Child was a group that attracted a lot of criticism from a wide range of people who talked to the Inquiry, not just victims and perpetrators. A number of concerns raised centred on the competency of Lawyers for the Child. The perception was that many of these lawyers were in the Family Court because of their incompetence to practise in other areas of the law. Indeed, their knowledge of child development was questioned, along with their unwillingness to listen to those agencies that did have that expertise. A common concern was that they do not listen to and/or prioritise the needs of the child.

*"But what the Lawyer for the Child did about that [father punched daughter 5 times, not interviewed by Police until eight days after complaint laid, and so not medically examined], was have a meeting. She didn't want to go to court. It had to be settled in a meeting, with agreements on what was going to happen. Why she wanted to keep away from a judge I don't know ... she'd had another person brought in by the court, because she felt I was making the kids make it up. And that person said, "I believe that they're being genuine about what they're saying." That didn't affect her opinion. She put a gag order on everyone that they weren't allowed to talk about it. So even me telling you [the Glenn Inquiry] now is actually breaching that. No one's allowed to raise the issue again. The kids aren't allowed to talk about it, no one else's allowed to talk about it. Well at the same time she was saying to me, the Police believe it's just rough play and ... afterwards I found out that the Police saw it as assault. So she was lying about what the Police were saying in this meeting."*

Lawyers for the Child were also frequently seen to be biased in how they functioned, particularly toward one of the child's or children's parents, and were often observed colluding with one of the lawyers.

### Child Youth and Family

People told the Inquiry that difficulties existed with Child Youth and Family and their interactions with staff. While many acknowledged that Child Youth and Family were “excruciatingly busy”, their single-minded emphasis on child protection was not helpful.

There was a general view that staff generally lacked consistency, professionalism, and some were judgmental, punitive and disrespectful to families. People also expressed concerns about the quality of Child Youth and Family staff’s documentation. They talked of substandard reporting that involved, for instance, recording wrong facts and not documenting phone calls made. Also reported were instances of evidence not being collected, or if collected not being used in court. Concerns were also raised about individual Child Youth and Family staff and poorly managed teams. People told the Inquiry that team performance often depended on individual supervisors or team leaders.

Another issue was the quality of Child Youth and Family’s liaison and coordination with other organisations and services. This meant that referrals were often made to over-loaded non-government organisations with long waiting lists or to those unskilled in domestic and family violence. It was also noted that non-government organisations avoided notifying Child Youth and Family of their concerns in case they were seen to be “failing”.

A particular concern of Māori talking to the Glenn Inquiry was that they believed the role of Child Youth and Family was to take their children. This deterred many Māori from asking for help from Child Youth and Family. There was a perception among Māori talking to the Glenn Inquiry that Child Youth and Family staff were “bullies”.

“Out in the community the perception of Child Youth and Family is: “Be careful of them because they’re there to take your children.” That’s what whānau think.”

The Inquiry heard from people about the tendency for Child Youth and Family to take “simplistic” approaches, such as “get away from him or we’ll take your child (or children).” Such approaches are taken without appreciating the dynamics and complexities of domestic violence and the impacts on parents, particularly mothers as the main caregivers who are often the victims of domestic violence.

Those working for, or who had worked for, Child Youth and Family said that the one day spent on the family violence cycle in their training was inadequate education and preparation to enable them to work effectively with families who are living with child abuse and domestic violence. There was a general feeling that while they were skilled in working with physical abuse, they had poor understanding of emotional and psychological abuse. As one worker explained,

*Unless he’s covered with bruises we won’t do anything about it.*

As well, people expressed concern that their main focus was on physical abuse without putting it into the context of domestic violence, and the enduring emotional and psychological effects on children.

It is ironic that, while people talked about Child Youth and Family’s focus being on child protection, staff were seen to act in ways that compromised the safety of children in either their care or the care of other people they used. Concerns were raised about the poor assessment of prospective foster parents by Child Youth and Family, especially those motivated by the monetary incentives for fostering children.



*Kids that were brought into foster care just because they would pay the bills. There was this one family that had eleven foster kids and three of them were her kids on top of that, so that's fourteen kids in a three-bedroom house. And they got everything that was shite. Like they got nothing, they were never fed properly, anything. Our welfare systems, they mean the best, but they're poorly resourced ... and there's too many people that don't want to be honest about it.*

We heard from a number of people who shared historical accounts of being abused while in Child Youth and Family's care. These actions are examples that confirm the perception that Child Youth and Family "dump kids here there and everywhere." Grandparents talking to the Inquiry reported getting little support, and that the children were often seen to be returned to their abusers too easily and without taking into account the children's wishes.

People also talked of Child Youth and Family staff privileging perpetrators' rights, with little thought about the effects on children and others. The Inquiry heard that perpetrators had access to children and were present at family group conferences, and that there were poor arrangements for supervised handovers. There were instances where Child Youth and Family required both parents to attend counselling and anti-violence programmes together – situations which were perceived as being dangerous and heightened the risk of further abuse and violence.

### Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

Many people talked about the value of having access to quality counsellors over an extended period of time. Some talked positively about the role ACC has in making counselling available. However, recovering from child abuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse was a long-term venture, and many people talked about the difficulties they had to get enough quality counselling, if they could get it at all.

They also mentioned a number of problems when trying to work with ACC, such as the process ACC had for funding counselling that was unsafe. The following is an example of a person's experiences with ACC.

*"I find them [ACC] unapproachable. I had to ring up and [they] tell you, "Oh sorry I can't help you [name deleted]." They put me onto the next person, and the next, so I had to tell 50 million people my story when I didn't have to. I thought that I had to because that's the only way I'd get help. So they made me talk to all these people ... I shouldn't have to tell people things that are personal, unless I want to. And they've really stuffed up my mind, ACC. I find it very hard to deal with them, I get very anxious ... They've mucked me around and mucked me around. So I went to the local MP and he got them to speed it up but at the moment I'm not in the state to actually go back to them ... that's another problem – victims of sexual abuse don't have an advocate..."*

People also talked about not having enough counselling sessions.

*"ACC didn't help at all as six sessions was not enough for anything to really be worked through. Also knowing only six sessions were available, I felt pressured and rushed and being an introvert, this just added to my load."*

Many people believed the “invisible” nature of child abuse, sexual violence and domestic violence, once the bruising disappeared, made it difficult getting help. This was not helped by some people’s view that ACC’s focus was on physical injuries, as one person told the Glenn Inquiry.

*ACC will only help sports people and that is true. They will not help abused children and youth because they cannot see the scars inside.*

The following person, who survived sexual violence, talked about the ongoing struggles to get a lump sum payment but instead ACC stopped her payments altogether.

*But you know, that was just cruel, I mean that was insanely cruel ... the ACC Corporation, obviously at the beginning, at some point, [was] set up with good values and for a good reason and [now is] completely corrupted and a bank of some description and disgusting, most disgusting.*

People also told the Inquiry of needing endurance to “battle” when dealing with ACC.

*It's been really, really difficult to go through. But I believe that really the most important thing you can do is just having endurance and just stick with it and go with it. You just have to go where it's taking you, because the inner world is now in control.*

A frontline worker shared the difficulties of working with ACC, particularly around the tension between client confidentiality and the reports ACC required.

*You see the thing that puts a lot of us off ACC is that there's a huge amount of time that you have to spend on writing reports. Now, you get paid for doing that but not enough. And also, holding confidentiality and writing a report to ACC [that] will allow your client to continue, it doesn't go together ... I know they have to protect themselves, and I know that they don't want to be spending their money in the wrong corners. But it just is too hard for a lot of us, we just think, we're not going to go down that route.*

Many people able to access counselling found the 20% top-up they were required to pay difficult to fund.

*It was not a very pleasant experience with ACC. No it was pretty bad ... having to top it up, there was nothing to top it up with ... owing a counsellor, panic, stress, it's like giving a little, and you don't get anything. I'd say the whole ACC thing's been bad.*

*It's still a financial burden, I mean by the time I finish my counselling it's probably going to be thousands of dollars. So ... I'm paying for my health.*

The effectiveness of counselling was also limited because there were not enough counselling sessions paid for. Sometimes people were too overwhelmed to begin counselling and when they are ready it is no longer available. People talked about being confused about lump-sum payments and who was eligible and what was covered.

*“Accident Compensation was also a total waste of time. I received counselling, but no monetary pay-out which as an abused child in state care, I was entitled to ... ACC, I understand does pay out to some clients for sexual abuse, so why did I not qualify for a lump sum pay-out.”*

*“So I've really spent the last twelve years, trying to get it, and in complete conflict with ACC, I am determined, under the Bill of Rights, because I know the Bill of Rights as well, and I know that what they're doing to us is torture, especially when they tell you there's care there...”*

The effectiveness of counselling, we were told, was often compromised by ACC's “one size fits all” approach. This meant that many people were fitted into an unsuitable counselling approach.

*“ACC have a prescription, they have a branch psychologist who directs my psychologist on what they think I should be doing. What they are wanting me to do is dialectical behavioural therapy ... you know, put your feelings in buckets (laughter) and do all this stuff, which is hopeless...”*

*“The ACC counsellor in [city deleted] was not helpful... into chanting and meditation which was not what I needed at the time ... seemed to be only concerned about claiming maximum from ACC.”*

The Inquiry also heard from a number of people who, in spite of their situation, were not able to access the counselling they needed.



## Work and Income (WINZ)

Those living with domestic violence need WINZ for financial independence so they can escape domestic violence. However, the Glenn Inquiry heard from people that, when women urgently needed a benefit, at times it took time to get an appointment.

What was also evident from respondents was the tension that exists between those who believe WINZ creates welfare dependency and those grateful for benefits at times in their lives when they were unsafe and needed money to survive.

People described inconsistencies in WINZ staff attitudes, information about entitlements and the support available, and especially the stand-down waivers available for those leaving domestic violence situations. There was also concern about benefit scams, the way people get treated, clients not knowing their entitlements, lacking literacy skills, and having to prove situations over and over. The Inquiry heard about young people who were unable to claim an independent youth benefit because it was already being claimed by their mother.

Older men also targeted young people so they could claim their benefit as a form of financial control. The following frontline worker talked about “benefit scams” being used to control vulnerable young people no longer living at home.

*“And that's like youth that we've come across on the streets that are not in care. And like, “Well what are you doing out here?” “Oh...” “Oh, how old are you?” “Seventeen.” “Oh okay, well you're entitled to independent youth or young person's benefit.” “Oh nah, 'cause Mum's getting a benefit for me and I don't want to get her in trouble.” You know that loyalty back to the family. CYFs know about this because we've talked. I said, we ... one of the kids, eh, and the boyfriend came in and he's a client of our organisation and he goes, “I'm going to put...” [the girl on his benefit] And I say,*

*“No way, this kid has got diabetes and if you have an argument, how's she going to get the money to get her medication when you're controlling it all?” And he had a fit and I said, “I don't care about you, I'm just worried about this kid. You're old enough to go off and do this and that. This kid is sixteen going on seventeen.””*

While people shared concerns about the abuse of WINZ benefits like the DPB, many also talked about the importance of having income to begin a new life, and being grateful for its availability. However, many women reported that they felt demoralised by being labelled as having children to get the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB). This person shared her difficulty in getting WINZ assistance, made more difficult by child abuse and incest.

*WINZ – are difficult to access without my parents [who were the abusers]. [I] had to lie to get help because I was supposed to disclose the father of my child, but he told me I had to lie ... The DPB. Well without this I don't know what would have happened. I would have been totally dependent on my father for bearing his child. This income, modest as it was, at least gave me a small degree of independence. I know many people abuse the system but I know I wasn't the only one on it because of incest. I know I used it wisely. I eventually managed to buy a house ... and then a car, all the while studying for my degree.*

Two people affected by child abuse also talked about how the DPB could have given their mother the option to leave.

*“If my mother had the resources to live by herself with her children [there was no DPB then], she may then have had the courage to tell the Police... Women's Refuge and the DPB came too late for us, but I am so glad they are here now.”*

The following story reflects how those affected by domestic violence suffered humiliating social stigma linked to being on the DPB.

*“The stigma of being a single parent on the DPB and the perception of others that I had my children in order to collect a benefit, when in fact I was escaping domestic violence. The checkout chick who made a fuss when I presented food vouchers from WINZ and rang the bell asking for a supervisor and rudely announcing that I was ‘another welfare voucher’. Dehumanising and humiliating me and my two children in front of others. The bank teller who refused to cash my WINZ cheque and told me to wait to the side as it was a busy day and she had real customers to serve. She was embarrassing me and my two children in front of others. These were a long time ago, but it seems that nothing has changed and may have actually gotten worse as I was recently out of work and went to WINZ for assistance. My observation is that WINZ has not improved its customer relations one bit.”*

Victims of domestic violence generally suffered significant hardship. The Inquiry heard how the government's benefit cuts had deterred women from leaving dangerous situations and incurring the debt associated with leaving. When they did leave, they felt they needed to “fight” for everything and were not helped by WINZ staff who avoided telling them about their entitlements.

*“It comes to a point where you can't budget anymore. Unless I'm going to take an extra five dollars out of buying groceries or another ten dollars out of paying the power this week. And it's like either way I'm going to have to cut costs somewhere where I'm already cutting costs. And then I'm just going to end up with more debt.”*

Another person talked about having to fight for everything.

*So we've worked with a lot of the agencies. That in itself is hard work, because you've got to fight for everything that you need – whether it's Work and Income, whether it's ACC. Actually ACC's probably one of the better ones. But then WINZ takes everything away. So financially, every step of the way it's hard.*

In addition to women needing to fight for their entitlements, the Inquiry also heard from a number of grandparents caring for their grandchildren with no financial support.

*There are all these holes in the system ... Child, Youth and Family ... when they removed [name of granddaughter] they didn't have to pay. We didn't get paid any money so we had no clothing for her. We asked for clothes and we got a blue newborn sock and a pink newborn sock and one onesie covered in faeces and we had nothing else ... So we rang up Child, Youth and Family and said, "Look can we have some money for her milk powder?" And they said, "No, no, no, [baby's mother] gets paid." And we're saying, "But you removed her from her, why?" And they said, "No, no, it was a mutual agreement that she be removed and that you care for her, if they want to come and take her back at any time they can." ... that happens actually a lot.*

Many people, confronted by insensitive WINZ staff, lacked the literacy skills to complete the forms to claim a benefit. One frontline worker explained the humiliation and consequences of not being able to read and write.

*People get released from prison and rock up to WINZ and they go, "Oh can you fill out the form?" Well the people at WINZ don't know this person doesn't know how to read or write and so he stands there and goes, "Oh f\*\*\* you bitch and f\*\*\* your system and get the f\*\*\* out of my..." And next minute, trespass [for] two years. For two years this person goes on the street, commits a crime, does whatever, because he's too embarrassed to say that I can't read or write. So we face a lot of that with our clients ... And they get trespassed from IRD, from WINZ, from the hospitals, 'cause those people don't know. They act like that because that's the only way they know how to cope.*

People also expressed their frustration at not being able to see the same case worker and having to "prove" their case to WINZ over and over.

*"It got to a point when I started with WINZ [for help with counselling] it was every thirty sessions, by the end of it, it was every ten sessions. And it was actually getting to be incredibly annoying to have to be continually having to prove that I needed it [for depression]. I shouldn't have to spill my life history ..."*

*"They make you see a different case worker every time, make you tell your story in an open plan office – and no one tells you that they have private rooms for you if you've got sensitive information to talk about with them."*

People also talked about concerns over the WINZ environments – waiting areas that were not user-friendly, lacked privacy and were generally unsuitable for children or people with disabilities. The following instance describes how people, needing to access a bathroom, had to leave the WINZ premises and risk losing their place in the queue.

*“While I was in the WINZ waiting area for my work seminar appointment, I noticed that the waiting area is right by the door with automatic doors that open if anyone walks past it. The aircon was not having any affect in that area. There is no water and the public toilet was on the street outside. So if you leave the waiting area and your name is called while you are out they put you at the bottom of the queue again. Seeing the distress of people with small children, with disabilities, elderly people and mentally unwell people all congregating in the same waiting area and being treated indifferently by the sour faced woman at the desk is really disconcerting.”*

A number of people expressed concerns about the government’s requirement for women to return to the workforce when their youngest child is five years old. Most women had the added stress of trying to get an education. The following women affected by domestic violence told the Glenn Inquiry of the stress and immense difficulty involved in re-entering the workforce.

*The Government is not realistic about the economic situation and keep pushing for solo mums to seek employment once their child is in school. They do not work with the Family Court to find out that some of us have ridiculous parenting orders which makes seeking employment difficult. And there are some of us mothers that put our child first, prioritising them, rather than leaving them in after school care.*

*The minute I finished study, Study Link didn't want to know me. WINZ didn't want to know me. I was in limbo. And the thing is I'd actually got a job. And I just worry that, because I was so strong at that time, my worry is for those that aren't ... this could have been their downfall. Send them straight back into the [domestic violence] cycle.*

*How am I going to support my kids, get them to school, work and study. That is what I'm going to struggle with. Either I get a job in the meantime, before she starts school and have her in kindy and stuff, or I wait till she's in school. My youngest is in school and then I have to start studying and working part-time and trying to juggle my kids too. So I think it's a lot of pressure for a lot of mums out there that haven't had any education or anything to get a job. They're going to have to study or find somewhere that will take them. So that's going to be stressful.*

### Corrections

The Inquiry heard about the lack of services available inside and outside of prisons that are designed to work with perpetrators of child abuse and domestic violence. Many perpetrators have had abuse and violence inflicted on them while they were growing up. This has influenced the way in which they interact with others, particularly their partners. Change in behaviours and attitudes require tailored programmes, and recognition that for many their actions reflect a lifetime of inappropriate behaviours. We heard that far from addressing unacceptable ways of functioning, prisons are instead a potent learning environment whereby perpetrators learn more “tricks” and become angrier.

*“There’s not enough support services out there for perpetrators. They can choose whether or not they get help when they’re in prison, and if they don’t want to, you can’t do anything about it. They come out just as angry, if not worse, as in my ex-partner’s case.”*

Both frontline workers and perpetrators told the Inquiry that it was difficult for perpetrators to acknowledge their own histories of childhood abuse and domestic violence and to seek help and treatment. Prisons need more mental health services and on-site counsellors. For those on probation, there needs to be better monitoring of the completion and outcome of stopping violence programmes. Failure to do so reinforces the lack of accountability for perpetrators. Concerns were also raised about community service for youth justice, particularly those held on family marae that were not checked for completion, particularly when the whānau “covered” for them.

The Inquiry heard from people that Corrections staff compromised victim safety by providing perpetrators with victims’ addresses, and were able to extend legal proceedings for custody of their children by running challenges from prison. We also heard that there was a general lack of cultural sensitivity by Corrections staff for Māori. Probations officers were reported to have large workloads, and treated people as “pieces of paper”. The Inquiry heard that the release of prisoners was a time that increased the risk for victims’ safety. People told of newly-released prisoners being able to live close to the victim, so that they could access their children. One area in particular that the Inquiry heard was not working well was the victim notification registers, and victims not being notified of the impending release of a prisoner, or only being informed the week prior to release.

## Health

People living with child abuse and domestic violence are highly likely to have contact with a health provider at some time in their life. Therefore, health providers are ideally positioned to identify and support people to seek the proper help for their child abuse and domestic violence. All the same, people told the Inquiry that health providers’ responses were generally slow and poor.

We were told that the medical model promoted short-term interventions (such as prescribing anti-depressants or referring people to a website) instead of ongoing trauma-focused interventions that need to be delivered by skilled practitioners. The reality was that many practitioners were not knowledgeable nor skilled enough to work with those presenting with child abuse, domestic violence or sexual violence.

*We [community frontline workers] talked to mainly the nurses that already worked with [organisation] so they know what they can and can’t do. ... They’re not skilled at dealing with sexual abuse, and it’s a big frightening, scary thing for them as well.*

Many people talked about missed opportunities to intervene or to raise “red flags” for risk to people’s safety and wellbeing.

*From the age of four onwards there were a numbers of flags, indications of abuse, that weren’t actioned. And so the positive out of that, if the system had been set up right, Plunket could have identified [the problem] and there should have been some sort of follow-up.*

Other barriers to accessing services were the threshold for access, service “patch protection”, and privacy. These factors prevented agencies from working together. The Inquiry also heard from people about the lack of services available in small towns. The threshold for access to mental health services is currently too high. For instance, youth with mental health problems, as a result of sustained child sexual abuse, reported not being able to access help for their problem, because they weren’t “mad” or “bad” enough. Many people talked about the unhelpful divisions between domestic violence, mental health and alcohol and other drugs services acting as barriers to being able to heal their trauma. The following frontline worker talked about the difficulties in navigating the health system due to poor information about what is available and how to access it.

*“They’ve [young people] got no experience in navigating health systems and support systems. Not only do they not know that services exist, they don’t even know that they could be helped. They don’t even know that anything could help them.”*

People also talked about being put off from seeking help for mental health issues as this was often used against victims in custody disputes, in seeking employment, and gaining insurance. These people also told the Inquiry about the consequences of having WINZ pay for their counselling.

*“I go through the [Women’s Centre]. During that time I know one lady who said that she actually did see the doctor. She actually asked for help, and that information was used against her through the court and it was used successfully by the other partner by saying she’s crazy, and that she’s not fit to look after the child because she’s having mental issues.”*

*“No I got it [counselling] through Work and Income, my doctor just kept signing me off as having depression. And the really annoying thing is now, when I’m trying to get health insurance and life insurance, I can’t, even though I wasn’t depressed. There was a period of time I was very unwell, but my therapist puts it as a normal reaction to extraordinary circumstances, and she never believed I’ve actually had depression ... But of course now on my records it says I’ve got depression, ... and the thing is there was a number of reasons why I was having therapy, but I never wanted WINZ to know the reasons, it’s none of their business. So having my doctor write down depression meant that I kept getting my thirty sessions.”*

Numerous people also told how a lack of funding meant that those seeking help for historical child abuse, sexual violence and domestic violence are unable to access counselling and health provider support. The cost of private counselling is too much for many, despite being told by a lot of people that counselling supported them to live better lives.

The Inquiry also heard, from those who were able to have counselling, that the quality of counselling and therapy was frequently poor. People reported that they needed a number of referrals before they found someone they could work with.

Another area that people talked about was reaching the right balance of privacy and confidentiality – it was either too much where details were not given to grandparents who were the current caregiver, for example, or it was too little as in the instance when an unsafe father was told what his daughter disclosed. It was also noted that people talked about the difficulty in keeping confidentiality in small towns.



“My daughter had on-going infections that she shouldn't have been getting. They were internal vaginal infections. There were four different doctors that she'd seen. 'Cause I had to take her to whatever doctor was available at the time when she had an infection that needed antibiotics. 'Cause they were staph and strep infections, which if they enter the bloodstream, that's very serious. So it was often she needed to go to an emergency after-hours clinic to get treatment. So it was whatever doctor's available. The kids' lawyer told the court that she was getting thrush infections, and that the doctors weren't concerned, that it was just normal childhood. But the doctor that she claimed to have a letter from, which I don't know whether the doctor was bullied into writing that or not, but they said that the doctor didn't have any concerns. This same doctor had insisted ... I contact CYFS about what was going on.”



## Education

Many people told the Inquiry about education providers who believed child abuse was “not their business”. Yet schools and teachers are often the most constant people in children's lives outside of their families, from pre-school years through to tertiary.

*So even teachers too, teachers never said anything ... I was kept in the same class for two years. There was all sorts of events that happened during that year, such as wetting my pants in the classroom and nothing was said, nothing was done ... And there was loads of other things, but the biggest thing that probably impacted my life when I was growing up with my father was when he gave me a bash big time. He lost control and I think he just continued to, with his hands, spanked my backside to the point where his hand was almost bloodied, my arse was purple, black, blue and the only person I showed it to was my best mate. And he may have said to his mum at the time what had happened. I couldn't sit down for a couple of weeks and nothing was said at school, so again there's that whole culture of silence ...*

People also talked about the difficulty of young people disclosing abuse and having the trust to tell someone but needing to trust them and be willing to lose control of the events following any disclosure, as this frontline worker explains.

*They [young people] showed a huge distrust of the adult world. Some said they'd turn to school counsellors, but many were really distrustful of school counsellors and nurses because they had seen them breaching confidentiality in other areas. And there's all that same stuff in the fear that they won't be believed, but the overriding fear was that if they'd told somebody that could help them, they'd lose control of the process, and so things would start to happen that they actually couldn't control.*

Many people who talked to the Inquiry about their childhood abuse spoke about teachers ignoring disclosures and obvious signs of abuse at home. Often teachers did not respond and/or punished them when they were "acting out". Many of these people told stories of horrific physical, sexual and psychological abuse during their childhood, and they had no one willing to protect and support them. A number of these people went on to become victims of domestic violence as adults.

It has become clear to the Inquiry that teachers lack the necessary preparation to identify child abuse, and when they are prepared, they don't seem to know how to respond to it in a safe way that prevents children from being abused further. On the other hand, a number of people also gave examples of false allegations being made against parents about child abuse. Given the importance of teachers in children's lives, this is an area that needs attention.

*"It might've been a couple of weeks later, and he said to me, that what he [son] heard in the Keeping Yourself Safe programme was what was happening at his dad's house, straight out. So he recognised that, so he spoke to me about it, then he spoke to his teacher about it, and then the school made a half-assed attempt. They don't know how to deal with it. It's like the hot potato, they didn't know, they had this great programme, but then they didn't know how to deal with it, when everything bubbled up to the top, then they didn't know how to deal with it..."*

*"Teachers need to be aware to document kids who are regularly [abused]. I mean I can name the kids in my school who I suspect are being abused. But teachers aren't equipped to do that out of college. They're not taught to do it. They're not taught to be vigilant. We're not taught how to deal with it specifically."*

We heard that disclosures people made at school as children were often managed badly, putting them at greater risk. Or discussions with the alleged abusing parent were believed over the child's version.

*I was really worried for [child's name] about the fact that he was so brave to speak up about what's happening, and then to be shut back down again [by the Deputy Principal].*

However, some people did mention how an individual had helped and made a difference for them as children. Here is an example of how a teacher can make a difference in a person's life.

*“The only one [teacher] was in sixth form. And that’s when it got to a point where I was coming to school in tears, and ... I actually remember the day, I basically broke down in class, and she asked, “What’s going on?” I finally said. And then she was my emergency contact, so that if things blew up at home and I could get to a phone, then I could ring her and she’d make sure I was safe. And if I was suicidal then I was to ring her and make sure that I wasn’t going to do anything stupid.”*

The Glenn Inquiry heard that when children, suffering abuse at home, acted out at school they were punished. No one asked what was happening for them to behave as they were.

*Yes, the school counsellor, who actually knew about the violence that was happening in our house, gave us detention. We were wagging school. We started getting into wagging school and so we got caught and the school counsellor of course started digging, “What’s going on?” And so my sister and I were able to tell somebody, but we were punished for it.*

Undoubtedly, ignoring the potential abuse children were living with had long-term consequences, as the following child abuse victim and a frontline worker shared.

*I remember some teachers I had. I could actually read and write, I could do things [but] I was too afraid, ‘cause I got a lot of beatings doing homework. So even if the work was right, my father was so drunk he’d say it’s wrong. So I was too afraid. ... And I really think it plays out and it comes out in my dyslexia ... I could never write ... between dyslexia and abuse the confusion...*

Child abuse and domestic violence was also often a cause of non-attendance at school. However, the Inquiry heard that this was not always followed up.

*“Attending school is one of the most important socialising experiences in a child’s life, as well as being a useful means of providing structure. Yet we have become slack to the point of neglect in dealing with the problem of non-attendance. Children who are not attending school are being neglected.”*

The school environment itself was also mentioned as an area needing attention, especially when children enacted abusive behaviour and violence in the playground, including bullying. The following teacher gave an example of the existence of different understandings of bullying within schools.

*“I think there would be no bullying in our schools, and I have a colleague who’s a Pom [English] and he says, “What do you mean bullying, it’s just a little bit of give and take.” And I said, “I think it’s got a really different connotation in New Zealand, the word has a different meaning. It’s far, far deeper and harsher. I trained as a primary school teacher, and I’ve had children and now grandchildren going through the education system, and when I think about bullying ... that’s violence.”*

People told the Inquiry that while having social workers in schools is a promising initiative, they do not always live up to expectations some people held. Some frontline workers talked about their concerns that child abuse was separated from domestic violence.

*Social workers in schools – that's awesome, but they're limited. One of the things that was really clear here, is that the government is not connecting child abuse with family violence. We need more contracts for social workers in schools.*

### Community and Non-Government Organisations

The Inquiry heard from a range of people working in community organisations. They told us that short-term funding (for instance 6 to 12-month contracts) is a major barrier to their working well in the areas of child abuse and domestic violence. Many organisations have to seek grants and donations to carry out their work.

*We get no government funding for what we do, it's all grants and donations and it's hard work. There's lots of other charities out there doing the hard work. If all the charities pulled the plug where would we be? Yeah, it would leave a lot for the government to pick up.*

Many frontline workers talked about their services being driven by funders' needs rather than what could be considered best practice. People from non-government organisations also talked about the difficulty that competition creates, particularly working collaboratively with other organisations. They talked about competition leading to "territorial" behaviours and reluctance to share relevant information.

*“Agencies, especially NGOs, are very protective of their clients and are often reluctant to share information, especially when a child may be at risk. During my time with NGOs I have been involved in discussions where senior management have chosen not to notify CYF when there is clearly domestic violence and/or abuse of a child.”*

Funding availability dictates the nature, quality and length of services and programmes. The Inquiry heard from a number of people who worked voluntarily or from an office in their home, or another service if they were able, because adequate funding was difficult to secure.

*“Lack of personnel and finances limit the effectiveness of our work. The volunteers we have are always over-worked and dealing with very stressful issues. Basically, we need more people who are trained and motivated to help. It would be good to reward these community workers with an income and petrol money. Basically, our group would like to help more families and abusers. So we try and network with other organisations. However, other organisations either have little money or time or do not want the responsibility of abusers and the abused. So, the abuser and abused feel dishonoured again – no one cares, so why should I?”*

People told us about a number of things that needed attention. Programmes were limited in duration with little change from one offering to the next, and it was not unusual for them to be general (rather than focused on domestic violence). Some programmes were also geographically distant or difficult to get to. We also heard that children required both parents' permission to attend community domestic violence programmes and this was a barrier to children getting the help they needed. Of real concern was perpetrators' attendance at mandatory stopping violence programmes – there was little or no follow-up to make sure that they attended or to check how effective the programme was.

*You get arrested, you get bailed, you get put out onto the street basically and so for me it's a toss-up between whether I took myself to a domestic violence course [voluntarily], or whether I got recommended [ordered].*

Issues surrounding the motivations of staff working in community organisations were also raised with the Glenn Inquiry. People stated that workers frequently had personal agendas that interfered with the delivery of services and programmes.

*I am concerned about people within the 'helping' organisations who have their own personal agendas. I have come across these people in Women's Refuge, Victim Support, Budget Advice and other organisations. In some cases the people may have suffered from abuse themselves but it has been a turning point and made them anti-male, or anti-female ... I am concerned after my contact personally within these services.*

Suitability of staff working in community organisations was also something people talked about. People talked about the inadequate screening of staff working with children to ensure they were fit, safe and suitable. In fact, programmes could be run by staff without any knowledge and experience of child abuse and domestic violence.

*Some staff were not able or confident enough to ask questions regarding domestic violence. One example is of a staff member getting first-hand information about serious domestic incidents within a family but choosing not to ask the family and ticking on the database that there was no domestic violence. When questioned, she said that the family hadn't mentioned it and she didn't ask. Often staff felt threatened by their clients and stated they didn't challenge them too much as they were scared. I believe victims and perpetrators of domestic require a programme specifically targeted to address the violence rather than being involved with a generic social service...*

The impression we gained from talking to people, was that those working in community organisations tended to be a "jack of all trades". We heard that what is needed are specialist domestic violence programmes.

*"Victims and perpetrators of domestic violence require a programme targeted to address violence rather than being involved with a generic social service which are often "jack of all trades but master of none", where staff are not equipped to target a specific issue."*

A number of people also told us about no refuges being available for men who have been removed from their homes because of their abuse and violence.

*"One of the biggest issues, in Auckland particularly, is refuges. When men are removed from the family situation they have nowhere to go, they use couches, they use sheds. One of my employees used a freight crate at my office to sleep in. Because he was removed from the family home he had to live in a mixed flatting situation, which wouldn't allow his children to visit. He used my warehouse for his allocated children visiting time. There is nothing. There*

are no funds allocated, the chaps are thrown out of the house, more often than not they've still got to be employed to pay things like child support, to pay the mortgage, to pay for their own lives and any future life they may have. There is no spokesman for these guys, now. You can only live on a couch for so long. If they're drinkers, where are they going to go? If they're drug users, where are they going to go? They're all roads into jail. A lot of those times they end there, causing chaos within the family, with friends, and that anger's normally directed towards the ex, who's receiving all of the support. It's instant domestic abuse.”

### Women's Refuge

Many people who talked to the Inquiry supported the important role Women's Refuge has in providing women and children seeking safety and refuge from domestic violence, although there were occasional reports from women who did not feel supported by refuge workers. A number of people also told us that many refuges do not have enough room to meet the demand, and it is difficult for women without children to access refuge services, as they were considered a low priority.

“I'd actually I had Women's Refuge and talked to them, but not been brave enough. So after I had left they rung me, and said “have you got somewhere to stay because we can't take you, we are chocker, we're bursting at the seams.””

“Single women, grandmothers – Women's Refuge can't take them, 'cause they have a priority for women with children. And I understand that, but you do have women out there that have nowhere to go. What do they do? There's a six week stand-down with WINZ. How do they survive in those six weeks?”

“I called Women's Refuge that day, I had not planned to do that ... it just needed to happen that day. And I said, “Okay, aha, I've got my kids, I've got some suitcases, and I've got my car, where am I going to sleep tonight? Where am I going? What do I do?” And they said, “Well, if you have the money to get a hotel, we recommend that you get a hotel, and save the space at a refuge site for someone who needs it.” And I said, “Okay I can do that.” And so I went to a hotel that night, and then I never talked to Shine again, or Shine or Women's Refuge or whoever. No-one followed up with me, no-one checked in with me, no-one seemed to care at all how I'd done ... I woke up the next morning in that hotel saying, “Oh no what have I done?””

The Inquiry heard that these women were not followed up in any way to see if they have found a safe place to live.

The image of being involved in Women's Refuge carried with it a stigma, deterring some women and their children from seeking help and safety. The following woman told the Inquiry that she felt pressured by the Police to contact Women's Refuge. She was only just coming to terms with needing to seek help with her violent situation and wasn't ready to talk to anyone.

As soon as they said Women's Refuge I was like I really don't want to go to Women's Refuge. That's no reflection on what a great organisation it is, I just had to come to terms with what had happened. And then they said, “You need to think of someone you trust and somewhere where you can go and be safe, where your partner's not going to find you.” And that was a really difficult decision to make and the guy, the cop was like, “You've got five minutes, you need to work it out.” I didn't want to tell anyone what had just happened.

People talked about inconsistent referral processes that existed across the country for those seeking the services of Women's Refuge. This meant, for example, that some women seeking refuge from the violence in their lives became stuck between mental health services and Women's Refuge.

*“They said, “You're not mental, go see the refuge.” Refuge goes to me, “You've got mental health issues then go see the mental health people.” We were nowhere and it cost me everything.”*

Women's Refuge's programmes helping women to deal with their violence are often run during working hours, and therefore many working women find it difficult to attend. Those that did find programmes helpful. However, tight funding dictates when they can be made available.

Not all refuges are affiliated with the National Collective of Women's Refuge. Nevertheless, funding for refuges is limited, and changes to government funding and contracts do not account for the work that goes into working with women and children/whānau. Funding constraints also mean that generally rural areas cannot be serviced. We also heard that there was a lot of focus on finding funding so services can be offered.

*Our philanthropic funding really is for survival. Now one of the things with government funding is that ... they talk about results-based outcomes ... or outcomes-based ... Are we doing better? Are we making a difference? And it's all great in theory because they still pay based on volume ... So they're saying to us, “Right how many residents do you have in the house? Right you'll be paid for that many whānau”. But the reality ... is that one client requires a piss load of work and you won't see the actual outcome ... what we're trying to do is actually train our kaumātua and train people as a refuge with rubbing a couple of stones together and the smell of oily rags, and off we go.*

Another frontline worker agreed.

*Actually at one stage yeah, it was very, very tight, very, very tense. We weren't sure about our future, I think until somebody realised that actually refuge is not a money maker, and it's really, really dependent on our own commitments.*

## Summary

- Victims regularly face poor attitudes, racist and discriminatory behaviour, are not believed and feel subjected to further abuse and trauma by services meant to help.
- There is no genuine right of redress for poor service and behaviour, as complaints and questions go unheard.
- Perpetrators are too often not being held accountable for their abusive and violent behaviours.
- Seeking help is exceedingly difficult. It seems easier to remain in, or return to violent relationships.
- Those who leave a violent relationship, report living in positions of poverty and desperation.
- Inter-agency collaboration, communication and information-sharing are key areas that can help, are not working and need to improve
- People generally reported the courts, especially the Family Court, as being dysfunctional and not working.
- Lack of knowledge about child abuse and domestic violence, from the general public through to those professionals and frontline workers is a major issue and needs serious attention.
- New Zealand's binge-drinking culture that contributes to child abuse and domestic violence needs changing.





# SECTION 4

## *Doing things differently – ideas for change*



## SECTION 4: Doing things differently – Ideas for change

*“It’s not a matter of the system necessarily failing people, it’s a matter of how do we breakdown that barrier of asking? How do we do that? It’s not a matter of there’s not enough people out there trying, because there’s people out there trying. Look at you guys [the Glenn Inquiry]. It’s a matter of how do we make that mind shift. How do we as a collective actually start going, it’s okay to say it’s not okay and it’s okay to want to fix it. And you might not want to break down your family. You might not want to run away from your tane [man] or your wahine [woman]. But how do we do this together? How do we fix it?”*

Fundamental to doing things differently is recognising and understanding that child abuse frequently goes hand-in-hand with domestic violence. The people talking to the Glenn Inquiry made it very clear that child abuse and domestic violence is occurring across all sectors of New Zealand society. For many families, child abuse and domestic violence are inter-generational patterns of behaviour, reinforced by making abusive and violent behaviours a normal and acceptable way for interacting with one another and resolving problems. Even though we heard from many people about the normalisation of abuse and violence within families, the unhelpful and dismissive responses towards victims and perpetrators from others confirms that communities, services and society as a whole have also normalised violence. Societal acceptance of abuse and violence is evident in the people’s stories and the difficulties they have in getting help when they need it most. Without doubt, the Glenn Inquiry heard that while “extreme” cases often get attention, many others struggled to get positive and useful help.

The level and scale of the abuse being experienced by people talking to the Inquiry was overwhelming, even to those experienced working in this area.

*I thought I had heard it all, but I hadn’t come close. The level of abuse, the level of system failure, it’s far worse than I imagined. Saying the word ‘domestic violence’, it rolls off your tongue – hearing the reality of it is something else again.*

People’s stories of their experiences and the insights they contributed to the Inquiry confirmed some of what we already know, were insightful, and provided the opportunity to hear how things could be done differently. The Glenn Inquiry gained the following insights about doing things differently:

- there is so much power in simply being heard, listened to, believed, and not judged.
- violent incidents ended up being only part of the ongoing consequences and impacts child abuse and domestic violence had on people.
- sometimes the things that were meant to help didn’t – they just made it worse.
- too much time is spent traversing the ins and outs of ‘the system’, often leaving no time for healing.
- the connection between abuse as a child, domestic violence and child neglect came through again and again as a strong pattern of behaviour.
- there is a need for a fresh approach that moves beyond labels, theories and gendered approaches.

People told the Inquiry that there are (very) small numbers of genuine people supporting those affected by child abuse and domestic violence. These people were described as having “heart” and “commitment” to making New Zealand safe and violence-free. Most people spoke positively about the Police and the recent changes they had observed for responding to child abuse and domestic

violence over time. Overall, the people who spoke to the Glenn Inquiry – victims, perpetrators and frontline workers – have not given up and still have hope that New Zealand can be a better place for children, their mothers, their fathers and families. However, addressing child abuse and domestic violence requires the concerted effort of all New Zealanders – the government and all political parties, government departments, non-government organisations, community groups and the people of New Zealand. As one person stated,

*When the evil behaviour is in operation, it takes the whole village and the whole community to push it back up, to get it right.*

Addressing child abuse and domestic violence requires our whole society to work together, supporting others, particularly those affected by it. It also requires the efforts of those families affected, friends, neighbours and those living in their communities.

While the Glenn Inquiry heard from many people stories of resilience and endurance, they also highlighted that the system designed to help them often did not. Peoples used the words re-victimisation and abuse. Communities spoke of this and their powerlessness to effect any change. Any change must be driven by services that have people who understand the dynamics of child abuse and domestic violence and the implications this has on their practice. Yet, the Glenn Inquiry heard from most people that the court system and the people within it enabled abuse and violence to be perpetuated (directly and indirectly), compounding the trauma people had already experienced.

The Inquiry concluded that this country can no longer continue to tolerate the abuse and re-victimisation of vulnerable people by the very systems, services and people they need to help resolve their life circumstances. Violent incidents are often just a small part of the ongoing abuse that can be made worse when people attempt to seek help. The reality is that victims' emotional and spiritual healing is often delayed while traversing a system



that has only small pockets of excellence. People talked about the need to help children, women, men and families by supporting them to be safe and change unhealthy patterns of behaviour – there is no quick fix, rather the magnitude of change people spoke about requires a long-term, resourced strategy.

*“Villifying the person and shaming, humiliating them for their violence doesn’t always bring change in their behaviour. Humiliation is one of the less effective methods to alter thinking and behaviour.”*

This section of *The People’s Report* brings together the suggestions people made for doing things differently – it is their ideas for change (see word cloud previous page). Doing things differently involves:

- designing a systematic solution
- building on what works
- measuring, evaluating, improving, repeating services
- challenging what works and being innovative, and
- keeping what works.



## Zero Tolerance for Child Abuse and Domestic Violence

*A really strong point is that we just need to become a society that doesn’t tolerate anyone doing that to any child.*

In addition to New Zealand adopting a zero tolerance for violence, we were told there was a need to raise people’s awareness and understanding of child abuse and domestic violence, as well as promote healthy relationships. People shared a number of beliefs with the Inquiry that they thought should inform the development and implementation of any strategy and service addressing or coming into contact with child abuse and domestic violence. These beliefs were that:

- all people, and especially children, have the right to live safe, violence-free lives
- happy, safe children growing up create well-rounded healthy adults
- children rely on adults to keep them safe and to speak out when they need help
- people affected by child abuse and domestic violence want support not further blame and more abuse
- long-term support for recovery and change is needed in order to address child abuse and domestic violence
- all people need to understand normal and acceptable behaviour so they can recognise the child abuse and domestic violence they are living with, or others who may need help.

## A Multi-Level Multi-System Strategy and Approach

*“I strongly believe a more caring and honouring society would help undermine abuse at all levels in New Zealand. We as a nation need hope and moral-value leadership to make New Zealand the best country in the world. This is a must from all levels of society and leadership. We need genuine transformation!!! It must start with children and young people – they will be the next abusers. The more we ignore this, the longer the problem will continue.”*



People spoke about change happening at multiple levels (see diagram above) and across the multiple systems and services that exist. People felt that New Zealand’s culture and the messages inherent in our society’s silence make child abuse and domestic violence invisible and this contributes greatly to normalising them. The following people shared their views about what is needed.

*“The New Zealand culture [is still one] of silence where adults are still afraid to speak up for children or intervene, when concerned.”*

*“So we have prevention and they’ve failed in terms of prevention, because the message that he’s got from society is he can get off scot-free really.”*

*“And now very much the narrative out there seems to be, from my perspective, that all men are violent, physically violent towards women and children. And I don’t think that’s a fair narrative, I think it has to be, the narrative has to be that violence occurs in our society and it has to be dealt with and the individual person, whether or not it’s male or female, has to be seen as a whole person.”*

The Inquiry overwhelmingly heard about reviewing the entire system from the role of friends and neighbours right up to government agencies and politicians.

Going forward we were told that, New Zealand needs an overarching strategy to address child abuse and domestic violence.

*“There’s no overarching New Zealand strategy it seems to me, across all the sectors. Family violence is part of health, education, social services, but the system is just operating in its little silos. It feels like there’s just a great deal of inefficiency in that approach, and if there was some kind of an overarching strategy where people could see how they fitted together it would be better.”*

## National Strategy

People told the Inquiry that an over-arching national strategy is needed to overhaul the whole system and the services within it. People talked about the current system (society, systems, processes and the people in it) as being fragmented and dislocated. Communication between services is not working. Generally the system:

- is reactive and crisis-driven and not preventative or restorative
- run by people who most of the time have a poor understanding of the nature and impact of both child abuse and domestic violence
- is focused on short-term solutions
- has little recognition of the intergenerational component of family violence
- functions on too much labelling
- lacks professionalism in government departments
- re-traumatises people already fragile and vulnerable
- disempowers people going through the system, who do not seem to get their basic rights acknowledged, and
- does not provide enough support, advocacy and specialist services.

In brief, the system designed to help those affected by child abuse and domestic violence is, by and large, not working for them.



New Zealand needs a national strategy that is based on the recognition that child abuse and domestic violence is extensive and one of the most complex problems facing our country and its communities. A national strategy needs to ultimately aim for a society that values and respects people and communities that look after one another. People indicated that politicians needed to take the lead, and that there needs to be a national social marketing and education campaign aimed at raising people's awareness of what healthy relationships look like and educating people how to respond to those affected by abuse and violence. It needs to convey a clear message that ignoring child abuse and domestic violence is no longer acceptable.

Any strategic approach must be multifaceted. It needs to be:

1. **CHILD FOCUSED:** Everyone needs to be responsible for helping parents to grow healthy well-rounded children. Healthy children grow into healthy adults, and child abuse and the presence of domestic violence disrupts this.
2. **EVERYONE'S CONCERN:** People talking to the Inquiry indicated that all New Zealanders need to talk, share and work together to overcome child abuse and domestic violence, especially those working in these areas.
3. **PROMOTION OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS:** Healthy relationships are crucial for caring and non-violent relationships, be they relationships with children, partners or friends and neighbours.
4. **PROTECTION OF THOSE AFFECTED:** The safety of women and children must be a top priority. When women and children ask for help or show signs of needing help they need supportive, non-judgmental responses that keep them safe.
5. **PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND VIOLENCE:** Preventing abuse and violence, particularly intergenerational violence, is vital to stopping child abuse and domestic violence.

This requires focusing on people and families, and also changing prevailing attitudes and cultures that contribute to child abuse and domestic violence.

6. **RESTORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILIES:** Addressing the trauma and impacts for people and families living with child abuse and domestic violence. Equitable and culturally appropriate approaches are needed to address the social and cultural differences in the nature of child abuse and domestic violence experienced by different people.
7. **LONG-TERM STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS:** Achieving change will not happen overnight. It needs a long-term, sustainable approach that the government is committed to funding.

The following person explained the importance of having a long-term strategy that involves everyone.

*It happens as a community, it happens as whānau, hapū, and iwi. It happens when everybody's willing to weigh in and participate in supporting people to practice non-violent living. All the life skills we learn, we learn through repetition. And when your life skills are a repetition of violence after violence after violence, that's what you learn and that's what you carry. And if you want to do something different you got to relearn and you got to retrain and you got to have the opportunity to practice. Firemen don't just sign up and become firemen and start putting out fires. Same goes for domestic violence.*

A national strategy needs to recognise that a whole family or whānau approach needs to be taken to halt the intergenerational transmission of abuse and violence and its normalisation, together with the acceptability of violence and drinking alcohol. Furthermore, professionals and frontline workers

must be knowledgeable and skilled at working with people and families affected by child abuse and domestic violence.

Importantly, the development of a strategy must be informed by the voices of those affected by child abuse and domestic violence, and by frontline workers. The current reliance on policy-makers with little or no insight into, or understanding of, child abuse and domestic violence and its impacts does not work. As well as victims and perpetrators describing a system that doesn't work, frontline workers frequently talked about good programmes and services having funding withdrawn, as this person observed.

*New Zealand has done nothing in the last 50 years that makes a difference. Anything we did that did work was thrown out.*

The Inquiry heard frequently of the extreme difficulty for services to provide sustainable programmes, even those reporting positive outcomes. Achieving positive outcomes for those affected by child abuse and domestic violence requires long-term solutions, and an improvement in services' collaboration and responsiveness so that those affected by child abuse and domestic violence can have the best possible outcomes. Importantly, the people spoke about the need for any strategy to be adequately resourced and sustainable.

### Government as Facilitator of Change

The government (including the opposition parties) must lead and facilitate a comprehensive approach to address the current status of child abuse and domestic violence in New Zealand. It needs a unified approach and commitment by those who have the power to effect the necessary change. People told the Glenn Inquiry that politicians needed to facilitate this change.

*We need politicians to look beyond their parties, and be willing to hear about what works, based on good solid research and evidence, and frontline investigation. They then need to get behind that and really fund it properly.*

People told us about services that worked well struggling to survive, while other services (like those within the courts) were dysfunctional and did not work in the best interests of those needing safety, support and protection. While some people talked about politicians' unnecessary involvement and over-involvement in the area of child abuse and domestic violence, the Inquiry heard from others that there is a need for government to facilitate change, especially policy change, to address child abuse and domestic violence. People spoke of it being no longer acceptable for child abuse and domestic violence to be at the mercy of political favour. Individual politicians and political parties make decisions that they think will satisfy the majority of New Zealanders based on stereotypes and misunderstandings. Such an approach is distasteful and not beneficial to victims of abuse and domestic violence.

*“Part of the problem with the world is that it's run by megalomaniacs, the ones that want to be on top, and I'm not saying our local politician, our national politicians, and our central government politicians are amongst the worst megalomaniacs in the world. They tend to be men who want a lot of power. So they are the ones calling the shots with all of this, and they are often the ones turning a blind eye about the reality of male behaviour, and we've seen this with this government. This government particularly is very, very much in denial of what's going on in our society.”*

Despite the challenges, people believed that political agreement and collective will can create change. They said political parties working together on “fixing”

this problem is a way forward to addressing child abuse and domestic violence. Responsive, funded and sustainable services, where agencies work together collaboratively, are needed for families to live safely in homes without violence, whether they are women, children, men or entire families. One person typified the frustration of many who spoke to us.

*I can't understand the resistance. You spend \$100 million on a campaign for a power company, but won't put anything into the capacity of organisations to deal with problems you claim to care about.*

Addressing New Zealand's child abuse and domestic violence problems requires adequate resourcing. It is an investment in New Zealand's future. *The People's Report* is proof that ignoring domestic violence, or addressing child abuse on its own, does little to improve the long-term health and wellbeing of those affected by abuse and violence occurring within their homes. Many people talking to the Inquiry who live with adult violence also suffered child abuse – the two go hand-in-hand.

Part of a national strategy must include an extensive review of the Family Court and its systems, processes and people, as well as its interactions with the criminal court. While the Glenn Inquiry recognise the Ministry of Justice has recently reviewed the Family Court, people told the Inquiry that the government needs to overhaul the court system as it relates to child abuse and domestic violence. Indeed, judging from the stories that the vast majority of people shared about their experiences going through the courts system, there is an urgent need to look at the treatment that those affected by child abuse and domestic violence are subject to. There must be a change in the attitudes and behaviours of the people working in the courts, especially judges, lawyers and psychologists, as currently it appears this is anything but a safe environment for victims.



## Education of Professionals and Other Frontline Workers

The Glenn Inquiry heard from most people that there is an urgent need to address the education of professionals and other frontline workers coming into contact with those living with child abuse and domestic violence. Too often we heard of inappropriate judgments and treatment inflicted on victims that re-victimised them. These are the systems and services that are supposed to be assisting them and securing their safety.

Education needs to be two-tiered. First, there needs to be general education on child abuse and domestic violence, and the co-existence of these together. For professional groups this should be introduced in their undergraduate preparation and then again in their orientations to practice. It should also include the notion of inter-agency collaboration as crucial to working for the benefit of both victims and perpetrators. Second, there needs to be discipline-specific training that contextualises the knowledge learnt in the general training to people's specific roles, and training in how to engage effectively with those they are working with. This should contain a significant component on interpreting knowledge about child abuse and domestic violence for practice contexts, documentation and inter-agency collaboration. The Inquiry is convinced, after listening to people's accounts, that those who are unfamiliar with the intricacies of child abuse and domestic violence are in danger of putting women's and children's safety at risk.

## Inter-agency Collaboration

*“While new people in the community are keen to work respectfully and collaboratively, some people who have been in the community for a long time harbour distrust of other individuals and agencies. There are still individuals more interested in power than in true community collaboration, who like to say what is what and who is involved. This is extremely detrimental to agencies working well together.”*

Without doubt a collaborative approach to child abuse and domestic violence between agencies will enhance the outcomes for those affected and their family as a whole. For New Zealand to effectively address child abuse and domestic violence, all relevant agencies must work together, including those focused on providing support in crisis, securing children's and victims' safety, and those who focus on helping them to rebuild their lives. The Inquiry was overwhelmed with people's stories of how they were put at further risk or went without resources because agencies did not work together or they simply did not communicate or share essential information.

Services need to become person- and family-centred, as the continuation of the way in which services are currently delivered will disadvantage victims of child abuse and domestic violence, and to some extent perpetrators. The Inquiry heard from many victims who needed support and help, but instead encountered belligerent attitudes from staff who appeared not interested or pushed them from one service to the other. People reported being often scared, traumatised and lacking the energy to play what seemed to be “agencies' games”. This form of service delivery is far from person- or family-centred. Agencies need to start genuinely talking to each other and identifying barriers that prevent true collaborative practice and ways of overcoming them. Such collaborations come about through developing networks and of relationships, as the following frontline worker shared.

*I think it's also really important to have true relationships, rather than a whole lot of lists of people that you have relationships with and you can tick and say that you have, rather than actually having true engagement with each other and actually supporting each other.*

The Glenn Inquiry found there are lessons to be learned about collaborative practice, not only from Christchurch, but also from smaller towns and cities where agencies have been forced (often because of limited funding) to come together and find ways to collaborate. One frontline worker talked about how agencies were coming together in Christchurch.

*They wanted to get together, capitalising on the gift that the earthquake environment gave us, which sounds like a mad thing to say, but very true in that the gift is that there's new fertile soil of openness to try new ideas, because we've been forced to. And people are really thinking outside their boxes.*

People often talked about a “one stop shop” to promote inter-agency collaboration and coordination, which would involve selecting only those services needed to meet the particular needs of people and/or families. Such an approach could ensure better use of services, and reduce the burden on some overloaded specialist services.

### Major Review of the Court System

As the Inquiry has outlined in the section *What's Not Working Well*, the courts system was seen by the majority of people as being broken and dysfunctional. In their view, it is an area requiring government leadership to review and tailor a system that promotes the wellbeing of victims of child abuse and domestic violence.

The current system is considered a hazard to those using it. Victims should have their safety and protection needs attended to, and expect to have their proceedings dealt with in a timely manner. The Inquiry heard that proceedings for some people lasted years, and put people into limbo during this time. For instance, one person spoke of not being able to get help for her child who had been sexually abused because it had been before the courts in excess of two years. Areas for action identified were:

- a **code of conduct** for all those working within the Family Court. The Inquiry heard from many people about unacceptable and unprofessional behaviours they were subjected to, especially from lawyers representing women, men and children in the courts.
- victims need **advocates** to support and advise them, especially those without legal representation because they were ineligible for legal aid and could not afford the costs of a lawyer.
- **education of judges, lawyers, Lawyers for the Child, psychologists, and other court staff** on child abuse and domestic violence, particularly the psychological coercion and control used by perpetrators to manipulate people (including court staff) and proceedings. Many people told the Inquiry that perpetrators used the courts and the processes as part of their repertoire of manipulative tactics. Moreover, perpetrators and their legal team portray victims as “crazy”, “mad” and other similar states.
- the **removal of the gender bias** that is evident, and which fosters **institutional abuse and re-victimisation** of victims, while perpetrators were often not held accountable for their behaviour (for instance, lack of monitoring of completion and outcome of courses, and unenforced court and protection orders).
- **communication between the Family and Criminal Courts**, particularly with regard to perpetrators’ violent histories or concurrent proceedings.

- **revisit the burden of proof**, so that it lies with perpetrators not victims.
- **review of the adversarial system** that places an excessive burden of proof on victims, and leads often to drawn-out and lengthy proceedings that further disadvantage victims, and for many puts them into significant debt. People indicated they would favour a more collaborative system, where the burden of proof is on the perpetrator instead of the victim.
- **time limit cases** before the courts.
- **address the inadequacy and inaccuracy in documentation.** The Glenn Inquiry heard from a number of people who, when they eventually accessed their documentation, found inaccuracies and inadequate recording of events that disadvantaged them.
- **legal aid should be available for all victims** of child abuse and domestic violence.
- **mediation and joint counselling**, while preferable in an ideal world, puts those who have been psychologically abused at further risk.
- **shared care**, while desirable, is not always appropriate where children are used as part of the ongoing abuse and violence or are themselves indicating abuse.
- **a system created whereby children who have been sexually and otherwise abused have their perpetrators made accountable.** The Inquiry heard that often because of a child's age and perceived as being unreliable witnesses, no charges were laid against the perpetrator. This left those who had suffered child abuse and child sexual abuse, and their carers, without any form of justice.
- **revisit the Lawyer for the Child** system and the criteria for lawyers to act as Lawyer for the Child. The Inquiry heard that the majority of people who had involvement with Lawyer for the Child found that most were incompetent and often acted in ways that were not in children's best interests. Very few people talked

about effective Lawyer for the Child – they appear to be a rarity and not the norm.

- **revisit the complaints system**, which many talking to the Glenn Inquiry indicated did not work. People talked about the people involved in the justice system looking after each other, rendering those who questioned or complained about their situations silent and without any right of redress. The complaints system renders already disempowered people more so. This cannot continue and, based on the stories of people, there needs to be an independent complaints system.

### Child Youth and Family

The Glenn Inquiry heard from a lot of people, including those working in Child Youth and Family, that people working in this system “don't get” the dynamics of family violence, and generally persist in seeing child abuse as being separate from domestic violence. The one-day course social workers have on family violence was seen by those who spoke with the Inquiry as inadequate for them to work effectively with families living with child abuse and domestic violence. People spoke about Child Youth and Family not always working in the best interests of the child, with practices varying greatly across the country. Instead, they were viewed as often taking a policing and a punitive role.

The following grandmother talks about her daughter's and her own experiences of Child Youth and Family, which holds little hope for mothers trying to escape an ongoing violent relationship and retain their children.

“I think there's a lot of failings right now in the system. For example, there's never been a domestic violence callout at my home when I've been there. However, there are two notifications against me. One because when my daughter was there and I was [away], the partner turned up and had a go at her. And the second one,

*my other foster child's mother parked up the drive for ninety minutes and when I asked the Police to come and remove them, notification went to CYFs. And I'm told by CYFs I have two domestic violence callouts. I think that's wrong. My daughter's children, I have two of them. She's only recently started to work her way through it, because she's pregnant again and is really trying to keep this baby. But we're getting the impression from CYFs that's there's going to be no way, because there was 14 notifications where she was the victim before the girls were uplifted. What they didn't say, and it's all so wrong, was that she was in hiding. Her ex-partner, who's currently inside serving time for attacking, breaking and entering and attacking his next partner, was trying to find her by texting her all the time, "I can see you, and I know where you are." And she's ringing the Police to try and enforce the protection order. And they're all classed as domestic violence."*

People talked about many stories of inappropriate placement of children by Child Youth and Family in either family, friends or foster homes. When they get it wrong, there is no quick solution, made worse by poor communication and a lack of support and empathy. If families are to "heal" and parents be supported to become better parents, the current approach of Child Youth and Family needs to be reviewed. The Inquiry found it disturbing that people talked about being afraid to ask the Police or Child Youth and Family when they were concerned about a child's safety, and so they did not ask for help.



## Social and Economic Development

The Inquiry also heard that social and economic development need to be considered in order to reduce some of the stressors that many families living in New Zealand experience. People discussed the need to restore Kiwi values, especially those that are about caring for one another and promoting child health and wellbeing. While people referred to the widening gap between those who "have" and those who don't, particularly within the context of poverty (not enough money for food, housing, heating, for example) and disadvantage, they also talked about the change in societal values (such as the acceptance of violence, especially within people's homes) and the need for positive values that promote caring, non-violent and connected communities.

*We've got to change our society to be a good place, restoring some of our values that as Kiwis we pride ourselves on. But in reality they're not there anymore, it's the way we used to see society and I'm not saying that all this crap [child abuse and domestic violence] didn't happen, because it did.*

*We need to look, as a society, at our values. The people that have been lucky in life need to start looking at going, "How can I help those around us?" So there's change in society values.*

Effectively addressing child abuse and domestic violence, the Inquiry also heard, needs to be based on equitable approaches that recognise the diversity of the New Zealand population and that there is no one way to address child abuse and domestic violence. Despite the claim that we are "all one people", the Inquiry came to unmistakably understand that addressing child

abuse and domestic violence must pay heed to the social differences that exist to ensure that services are relevant, acceptable and culturally appropriate. This means, for example, taking into account the needs of Māori, those with disabilities (which needs further exploration), those living in poverty, and those associated with gangs.

### Poverty

The Inquiry heard that funding is a problem for victims of child abuse and domestic violence across all sectors of society, whether it relates to the stresses families are placed under to provide food and a roof over their heads, ‘wealthy’ women attempting to leave a particularly abusive relationship being left penniless, or service providers providing services where demand exceeds their capacity. Many people made it clear to the Inquiry that in order for families and communities to be strong and healthy, poverty and other issues relating to financial stress (for instance, housing and women’s financial independence to make choices) need to be addressed. The following frontline worker observed,

*“Lack of money is an issue. It makes it harder to bring up a family really well when you don’t have resources to do it and it’s often those stresses of trying to make ends meet that is the tipping point for a lot of people. Deprivation in all its forms often accompanies the client we see. This deprivation might be monetary and we can’t underestimate the effect that money has on families, from being unable to provide the necessities such as food and clothing and in many cases adequate accommodation, through to providing kids with opportunities to succeed where others take for granted.”*

Women’s financial dependence or independence makes the difference for many women deciding to stay or leave violent relationships. The Inquiry heard from a number of people that there was a high demand for Women’s Refuges, and that many

women did not meet their criteria to seek shelter: for instance, women without children, those with mental health problems, those with older boys or young men, and those whose partners belong to gangs. The reality is that for many women, refuges were not a viable option. Therefore, making it well known that women can access a benefit with the six-week stand-down period waived and how to access affordable housing when they have no money, are key to keeping women and their children (if they have them) safe.

### Community and Social Development

*Communities can answer and sort it out for themselves if they’ve got the resources to do it. You know? And that’s what they [the government] forget. That our community knows, or whānau knows what they need. It might not agree with what you think they need, but they actually know their own answers. It’s about giving resources and the energy, also a top-up of some sort to be able to get there, instead of cutting everything back or saying, “That doesn’t fit [the government’s agenda] so you don’t get it. You’d better fit this box.”*

This Māori frontline worker advocates for finding the answers in our whānau and communities, and highlights the importance of communities in addressing child abuse and domestic violence. Indeed, crucial to violence-free homes are healthy, resilient and well-connected communities where people who live in them willingly advocate for children’s wellbeing and support families to raise them. Community and social development is crucial to addressing child abuse and domestic violence. The Glenn Inquiry heard frequently from people that child abuse and domestic violence has been able to thrive to a large degree because of families’ social isolation.

Society as a whole has a lot to answer for. We rely significantly less on extended family and support networks and we've become very insular. When we're expected to live in the way that we do, earning more and more money, having more and more assets and often being geographically distant from support networks, life is difficult. Often young mothers are trying to raise a child, more or less alone, and dads are out working. Sometimes they [mothers] are then forced into part-time, full-time work, really early. The stresses and pressures are phenomenal, and the stresses and pressures on relationships generally results in stress-related violence, rather than a situation where you've got someone who is controlling psychologically. So I guess if you have a look at how to try and fix it, it's a social issue, and there's no quick or easy fix for that.

Such isolation has enabled child abuse and domestic violence to become normalised, which contributes to it becoming an intergenerational issue. Breaking the cycle of violence within families is crucial to stopping child abuse and domestic violence from being transferred from one generation to the next. The intergenerational transfer of child abuse and domestic violence is not just restricted to certain sectors of society, for instance Māori, as illustrated in the following people's observations.

*"I believe sadly we have lost at least 3 generations of families in the way New Zealand has gone. It has turned into "normal" for abuse in all ways, currently. We just accept it, and go, "Oh yes, but what can we do?" "It's okay, it doesn't affect us." Young ones have been brought up not knowing what self-esteem is. The cycle is getting worse, not better. And never assume it only happens in 'certain' families. Granted numbers maybe higher in certain areas, but it happens across the board."*

*"Anyone dealing with both adults and children in these situations needs to have 'real' education regarding this. The mental state of all involved, as well as physical and financial, is all part of one big picture. The whole thing needs to be looked at. The need to build self-esteem in cases of abuse is a major issue. And this can start at a very young age. The move to break the cycle has to be a top priority."*

*"We don't know what we don't know. People don't really know where to go for help, and we have this New Zealand trait – "she'll be right." It is a sort of culture. I'll put up barriers, people protect themselves by putting up these kinds of walls, and I could well imagine what childhood sexual abuse is kind of like; it's really up there in terms of people isolating themselves. I work with lots of couples that are separating and one of the key alarm bells that rings for me is when you begin to explore what dad, because it's normally the dads that are seeing me, what does he know about mum's history of sexual abuse or things like that? These things are just multigenerational."*

While the Glenn Inquiry heard from people about some excellent services and programmes, they also heard about those that need major review, such as the justice and legal system. As mentioned in the section of *The People's Report* on what isn't working well, the generally lengthy adversarial process that people talked about when they engage with the courts does not promote healthy or positive relationships, especially for the children that may be involved. Communities also have a role in raising awareness of local services available for women, children and men. They also have important roles in reducing and eliminating child abuse and domestic violence – people told the Inquiry that local child abuse and domestic violence contexts need local solutions.

Within communities are various services that people affected by child abuse and/or domestic violence can access for help. The Inquiry is very clear after talking to the people that child abuse and domestic violence need specialist services. For others working with victims and perpetrators, a sound understanding of the dynamics of child abuse and domestic violence and the various tactics used for intimidation and control is required. Re-victimising and re-abusing victims is unacceptable, especially when professionals (for instance, lawyers, social workers and Lawyer for Child) and other frontline workers (such as those working for CYFs and WINZ) do not translate the knowledge they have around child abuse and domestic violence into their practice.

### Attitudinal and Cultural Change

Many people talking to the Glenn Inquiry highlighted harmful issues that they perceived were a part of New Zealand culture. They said these issues needed to be addressed in order to address child abuse and domestic violence. The persistence of social stigma promotes the non-recognition of child abuse and domestic violence, and also perpetuates those being affected being treated poorly, whether they are victims or perpetrators. People told the Glenn Inquiry that, as a country, we need to create an attitudinal and cultural environment whereby it is okay for people to ask for help without fear of being further abused and traumatised by people reacting negatively.

What was exceedingly clear from a large number of people's stories was that by the time they "plucked up" the courage to ask for help, their abuse and violence had escalated and become horrendous. Often people asking for help had had their confidence and sense of self eroded, and could no longer tolerate the psychological abuse and the physical violence they suffered. People asking for help are genuinely seeking someone who will listen and be willing to guide them to safety. They do not need more of the "psychological abuse", which they have been living with.

The people who talked to the Inquiry indicated that given the gendered nature of domestic violence, men had important roles in addressing this problem.

*I think the fundamental change in society has to come from men. The reason I say that is that women have tried for years to change the dynamic that has led to sexual violence, both against women and children. But I think men reveal their kind of animalist nature, tendency, secret, whatever, amongst other men. They take it out on women and children, and I'm talking of course generally here, the perpetrators. So, all the other men who are not perpetrators have to unify with women in this fight, because they are the ones that can change other men. Women cannot. Children certainly can't.*

Indeed, societal change depends in part on recognising the important role that non-violent and non-abusive men have in challenging and holding accountable those men who do engage in abuse and violence. Children growing up need strong role models, both men and women.

People stressed that integral to the community and social development needed for New Zealand to be violence-free is an urgent need to address the unhealthy binge drinking culture that is prevalent. It is not only the way in which people drink that is of concern but also the accessibility and availability of alcohol (and to some extent other drugs).

*It's just that we've got a lot [of] work to do and we don't have the resources to do it, or the culture. So remember, we just love our couple of beersies, because that's everywhere you go, people, we're a drinking culture.*

In addition to the drinking culture prevalent in New Zealand is the general acceptance of violence within our communities. Media has an important role to play in heightening the awareness of child abuse and domestic violence not being okay, but sometimes journalists downplay the significant link between child abuse and poverty in the way they interpret statistical information, and how they “sensationalise” high-profile incidents of violence (for instance, the repeated televising of aggressive incidents in male sports, like rugby league). One person referred to this as New Zealand’s “thugby” culture. As the following person observed, among young men the culture of violence is the norm.

*“To some extent, violence amongst young men is much more accepted than it is amongst young women. As part of your inquiry, I encourage you to look at the whole culture of violence, and particularly the culture of violence that’s tolerated by both young men and our whole community. Boys can get much more rough and tough than girls because we accept that. I think we do open the door to unacceptable violence.”*

People were also concerned that media coverage at times perpetuates myths about “lying women”, rather than focusing on the crimes of abuse and violence. People who talked to the Inquiry cited the relatively recent 2013 coverage of the Roast Busters, and the reporting of high profile child abuse deaths that more often than not “mother blame”, even when the mothers were not present at the time of the child’s fatal injuries. In this way, journalists’ portrayal of violence-related events deters victims from seeking help – why would they when national media reinforces negative stereotypes, deficit explanations and engages in biased reporting?

The media has a key role to play in community and social development and changing the culture of drinking and violence, as the following person highlights.

*“If society, in the next 20 years, could come around and understand where we’ve come from, and try and have some grace and heart about it, and start moving forward to really supporting and caring about each other as neighbours, whatever, whoever, wherever we come from. But just to have this universal kind of desire for a better society then there’d have to be lots of education about that, like why we are the way we are and what needs to happen for it to be different.”*

In addition to promoting community awareness of child abuse and domestic violence, the media also has a role in promoting this as a problem that spans all social sectors, as well as portraying images of hope and recovery. Here is one woman’s account of how media coverage was a “turning point” for her.

*I heard about Women’s Refuge. I heard it on the radio. Oh God, thank God I heard it, and I thought if he ever touches me again I’ll ring them. Well he did, and I rang Refuge. That was the turning point, because they came and got me.*

Social and community development and raising awareness of child abuse, domestic violence, violence in general, and the harm of alcohol are reliant on widespread education and social marketing.

## People and Families

People need strategies for healthy relationships. An overwhelming theme coming through people’s stories was the normalisation of child abuse and domestic violence in some families. The Inquiry heard from people that they simply did not know that what was happening in their family, was not happening in other families. It is blatantly obvious that given the general societal acceptance of child abuse and domestic violence that still persists in New Zealand, evident by the way in which



children and victims asking for help get treated, not only is this abuse and violence normalised in communities, but also families. As the following person highlighted, this is a problem affecting all areas of society.

*The best things I think we can do are talk about it more and ask the hard questions. People need to be aware that it happens in the so called “good” families – the Pākehā middle class is just as vicious and damaging.*

We need to be conscious that child abuse and domestic violence is occurring in many family homes. Education is needed so that people know what child abuse and domestic violence are, and realise that they are not normal. Children and people need to know about safe places within their communities where they can go to ask for help.

The safety and security of family members must always be paramount, especially during times of crisis. However, the Glenn Inquiry heard from many people that at the same time there also needs to be a focus that moves away from individuals to the whole family.

*“With things like violence and abuse, our society, generally, looks at it as an individual’s failing, rather than looking at it from a social point of view. It is the whole system that needs to be addressed really.”*

*“I think agencies need to see the families as experts about their situation and assist families to understand their situation better. I heard a social work presentation at a conference recently and she said, the way she works with families, she doesn’t go in trying to fix their problem, she goes in trying to understand. And I thought that was the most powerful part of the conference I heard, you know, like to actually give people time to try and understand what’s going on for them and helping them make sense of it.”*

Families need help to find new ways of interacting with one another, and to rebuild relationships and their family.

*All the life skills we learn, we learn through repetition. And when your life skills are a repetition of violence after violence after violence, that’s what you learn and that’s what you carry. And if you want to do something different you got to relearn and you got to retrain and you got to have opportunity to practice.*

While for many families the damage may be too great for reuniting, for those families with children it is important for them to work on restoring relationships between parents, and parents and children, to the point that people can function amicably. The Inquiry heard that whole family, strengths-based approaches must be undertaken. Parents need support in how to raise children in non-abusive and non-violent ways. Therefore, long-term counselling and attendance at other programmes to learn new ways of doing things is crucial for change to occur within families. The following counsellor highlighted the importance for counselling to “mend” relationships between children and parents.

*“Just yesterday I had a little girl who’s in a separated situation and it’s not violent but the parents aren’t talking to each other and she did not want to spend so much time with her dad. But her dad had brought her to see me and so they were together, at the end we brought him in and she was able to tell him how she’s feeling. And for a child to do that, I just saw her whole body just go, phew! As she did it, she went off so much happier. When she’d come in, her eyes were filled with tears, there was lots of crying while we were in the bus between her and dad they were both crying when they were together, but lots of stress there, lots of*

*tension and then it just all went as they could communicate. So what I'm finding is important is, I guess what you guys [Glenn Inquiry] are doing here listening, I'm finding that so important that there's somebody to listen to the children, so many children are not listened to."*

The Inquiry heard from many people, including frontline workers, that there are some exemplarily programmes designed to help families rebuild their lives after the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and domestic violence. These programmes need to be highlighted as examples of how things can work. What was evident from what the Inquiry heard, was that some Māori providers have positive programmes aimed at the whole family and are achieving good outcomes. However, what is clear is that they see this as a journey that is not time-defined, and one that requires long-term whānau support in order to support members to address their abusive and violent behaviours. The importance and value of approaches that aim to get family members to interact amicably, at a minimum, was voiced by one person in this way.

*The way we raise our children, we have to give them positive words so they can grow up and feel confidence in themselves.*

### Free Long-Term Counselling

There is value and benefit in providing family members traumatised by child abuse and domestic violence with free, long-term counselling.

However, the Glenn Inquiry heard from many that long-term counselling was unaffordable and the number of sessions insufficient. Those who did have a qualified, effective counsellor (not always the case) found counselling valuable and that it helped them to get on with their lives. Those who had access to their ACC Sensitive Claim Counselling said it was valuable in their recovery although most

talked about the difficulty in accessing the top-up money they were required to pay.

The opening quote of *The People's Report* highlights the "tactics of domestic violence" that many people go through when they live their lives constantly at threat of physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual abuse and violence. If New Zealand is to truly address its child abuse and domestic violence problem, then consideration needs to be given to making available counselling to those who need it – children who are victims of child abuse and those who have lived only with domestic violence, victims of domestic violence, and perpetrators. The following woman highlights how counselling helped her make the decision not to return to her violent partner.

*"But for me at the moment, in order to deal with him, I've said, look I'm actually not going to try and mend the relationship between you and me. It's too damaged. And there's nothing, no benefit in it for me, to mend this. Actually the thing that I need for me is to move on from you. What you did is your problem actually, and I'm not going to live my life coming back to you. Saying, "This was horrible and I had a horrible childhood, and you were crap." Because I had one sister who does do that and it just tears her to pieces. And I think that was one of the reasons why I went, 'no I'm not getting in that, I'm not swimming in that pool, I'm off.' And that's how I'm managing it. Counselling, access to counselling, and good counselling, that has helped me to recognise a crap relationship, actually recognising it, and ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. What are the bells? Don't go there."*

As the Inquiry heard from many people, counselling is not a "quick fix". People need to have longer-term counselling to help them move forward, counter the relapses, and learn new coping strategies. Without counselling support, people risk being on benefits for physical and mental health problems associated with living in a "war zone".

They do not have the opportunity to learn new ways of behaving and coping and risk perpetuating the cycle of violence. It is in New Zealand's best interests to have free counselling available for those affected by child abuse and domestic violence.

### Code of Rights and Independent Complaints System

The Glenn Inquiry also became aware that people going through "the system" were often left disempowered and deprived of any way in which to have their concerns addressed.

Systems and services set up to support people affected by child abuse and domestic violence should not add to New Zealand's child abuse and domestic violence problem. Yet for many people, particularly victims, interacting with the "system" breached their rights to fair and just processes, especially in the courts system. The following quotes provide a snapshot of the sentiments.

*Lawyers use every dirty trick in the book so they won't have to pay you.*

*I've got a \$20,000 legal aid bill and my kid's still not safe and I still can't prove anything, and no one f\*\*\*ing wants to know.*

*Even the judges have no idea about domestic violence.*

Those who had tried to use complaints processes to get their specific issues indicated they were often denied that right. The general feeling was that those working within a specific system or service looked after themselves, and anyone with a complaint was rendered powerless. Sadly, the Inquiry heard from some victims, mainly women, that the lack of support and the negative treatment that they received pushed them back into their violent relationship. Those affected by child abuse and domestic violence should have a defined set of rights, and an independent complaints system when they are subjected to unfair and unjust processes.

### Māori

*"Enough money to live on, decent housing, decent food, forget the takeaways. Learn to put down a māra kai (vegetable gardens), access to our kaimoana (sea food) – ancestral eating – no booze, no dope. More whānau interactions, more whānau togetherness, and being able to be together and recognise each other's strengths and weaknesses, and work with them. No put downs, but heaps of encouragement, and lots of "I love you." Strategies for when anger issues come up. Everyone in the whānau would be inclusive."*

Cultural identity and engagement in Māori cultural activities are known to be protective factors for Māori whānau and their members. Yet, Māori whānau (extended family) feature highly in New Zealand's statistics for child abuse and domestic violence, along with other social and health inequities. Māori were once a people who held in high esteem their tamariki (children) and wāhine (women) because of the treasured roles they had in their whānau, hapū (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe). Nevertheless, colonisation brought with it new ways, including privileging the place of men, which rendered women and children as their possessions. As Aotearoa was settled, new ways of treating children and women were introduced to

Māori whānau and hapū, which included beating them. Some, but not all, Māori chose to adopt these new ways in their whānau as they were pressured to become assimilated with colonialists.

Processes of colonisation aided this transition among Māori whānau and hapū, and many whānau lost the tikanga that kept them safe and protected. Added to this, the Crown and settlers appropriation or buying of Māori land, together with the 1950s policies that resulted in the urbanisation of Māori, removed supportive whānau and hapū structures that existed. The colonisation of Māori and the subsequent historical trauma inflicted on them has left many whānau disconnected from their iwi and their Māori cultural identity.

The Glenn Inquiry heard from Māori that these experiences broke down their wairua (spirit, soul) and their mana (status, control), making people feel whakamā (ashamed, embarrassed) and whakaiti (belittled) – some of which has survived in successive generations. As a result, many Māori have adopted unhealthy relationships and behaviours and do not want to talk about their own child abuse and/or domestic violence. The Inquiry heard that this silence reinforces the intergenerational transfer of abuse and violence within the whānau and hapū. What we see today is many Māori without strong cultural identities, cultural practices, land, language, living in urban areas, while the majority live in the poorest neighbourhoods signified by lack of money, housing, access to quality education and healthcare, and high rates of child abuse and domestic violence.

Over one in four of those who came forward to talk to the Glenn Inquiry were Māori – they included victims, perpetrators and Māori providers of services for those affected by child abuse and domestic violence. Those Māori who came forward talked to us about the need for sustainable, better funded and culturally relevant services, based on tikanga Māori (cultural beliefs and practices, customs – ways of doing things).

Evident in the stories Māori shared with us was the intergenerational nature of child abuse and domestic violence, and the importance a positive Māori identity could play in their healing. Just because people looked Māori was no guarantee that they were in any way grounded in Māori cultural traditions, as the following wāhine told the Inquiry when she shared her journey and experience as a Māori women’s refuge educator.

*[Part of the journey for women is about] reconnecting our Māori women with their whakapapa. And not just their whānau whakapapa, but their whakapapa that takes us all the way back to Hineahuone and Papatūānuku. And the first instance of incest and rape, and how that has kind of shaped the way we are. And that taonga tuku iho (treasures handed down), that mātauranga (knowledge) from our tupuna that said, “Never again will our women be violated as Hine-titama was.” So being able to bring them into that knowledge is hugely valuable.*

For many Māori, their whānau have lost not only their cultural connections, but the essential tikanga that guided the way in which they treated each other, as well as their “community connections” and support systems. Doing things differently for Māori requires rebuilding the essence of who Māori are as a people and their whānau. This requires strengthening who they are, equipping them with the necessary basic requirements for living (such as food and warm homes), introducing them to new tikanga and ways of interacting, and providing them with long-term support to encourage and sustain positive change.

The Inquiry heard from Māori victims and perpetrators, as well as Māori frontline workers, about some exciting initiatives that are happening in communities. Many of these, however, are under-funded and run on the goodwill of the people and

the community. Māori made it clear to the Inquiry that child abuse and domestic violence is everyone's problem, and especially noted that politicians need to stop using it as an issue for their political gain and start working together. The protection and safety of everyone's lives is the most important thing.

Doing things differently for Māori involves addressing child abuse and domestic violence from a kaupapa Māori perspective. Everyone needs to talk about these issues – whānau, neighbours, communities, workplaces, schools, and society in general. People, whānau, and communities need support, including their capability for empathy. Importantly, solutions need to be “practical and down to earth, doable and not fluffy – real”. In this section we begin by briefly talking about things that are not working well for Māori, which are in addition to those already outlined in *The People's Report*.

### What is Not Working

Māori brought to the attention of the Inquiry that many Māori living with child abuse and domestic violence going through “the system” are subjected to institutional abuse, causing those seeking help to feel reticent about coming forward. People talked of wāhine who felt left with no options but to return to violent relationships, or forced into situations whereby they were unable to provide food for their tamariki. Māori community frontline workers talked at length about inadequate funding and short-term contracts for community-based programmes that did not enable longer term planning.

### Institutional Abuse

In addition to the usual trials faced by people living with child abuse and domestic violence, Māori said that they face additional challenges that most other groups of people don't. People talked about the discriminatory and racist behaviours many Māori encounter when they seek help. This is seen as a deterrent for engaging with “helping” services or agencies. People frequently spoke about punitive approaches that undermine efforts to become violence-free, which in some cases are destructive

for whānau. One frontline worker talked about protection orders working against Māori mothers. Many frontline workers advise Māori mothers to manage the degree of information they contribute to these applications in order to avoid Child Youth and Family removing their children.

*CYFs can look at the [information on the protection order] and uplift the kids. We've had that happen to us. So you've sort of got to be clever about doing protection orders as well. You put in what you think will get one, but not all of it too. A lot of barriers are actually the institutions that we work with in some way. I also find that our food bank, we got a lot of whānau in [town] who are hungry. And our food bank, they make our whānau feel pōhara (poor). And they're allowed to go three times and after that they need to go to WINZ, and they get declined from WINZ. So they have to go te mea, te mea, te mea (and so forth) budget, whatever. But what am I trying to say? There's got to be a better way where their mana (esteem, authority) is not left out.*

The Inquiry heard of numerous incidents of institutional abuse experienced by Māori living with child abuse and/or domestic violence when attempting to get help. Some examples involved:

- being unable to get legal support
- encountering obstructive behaviours from people who can only be described as institutional bullies
- being accused of lying and getting things wrong
- encountering a range of inconsistencies when dealing with people at organisations
- breaches of their privacy
- inconsistencies in the information-sharing between agencies
- people making decisions regarding tamariki without reading the content of reports

- Child Youth and Family staff having varying views on what constitutes the “best interests of the child” that lead to Child Youth and Family inappropriately placing children into care with friends or family
- Child Youth and Family or the Family Court forcing children to have contact with their abuser
- long, protracted court processes that only serve to “punish” rather than help tamariki
- uplifting children from carers with little or no notification so the child can be prepared for another change in living circumstances
- not investigating to verify if a child was present at a domestic violence incident, and
- inaccurate recording of domestic violence incidents that wāhine have no opportunity to amend.

Concern was also expressed to the Inquiry that Child Youth and Family negatively focused on mothers, and appeared to forget about tamariki in doing so. People indicated that despite there being help in the communities to support whānau or care for tamariki, these were often not explored as an option. There appears to be reluctance for Child Youth and Family staff to work with community groups and whānau, instead taking the easier route of uplifting their tamariki.

It was not unusual, the Inquiry heard, for Māori women escaping child abuse and domestic violence to be pōhara (poverty-stricken), finding it difficult to get a benefit, legal aid, and a warm house. While it was recognised by frontline workers that Housing New Zealand houses were insulated for warmth, this was often not the case for privately owned rental houses.

*All the private landlords, which a lot of our whānau that don't have a lot of money have, don't give a stuff about the whānau, it's really, really sad. So we've got whānau living in cold houses. So just to be able to give them wood to warm their house is fantastic. If only we could just create an employment opportunity for them.*

It became evident to the Glenn Inquiry that Māori community providers were undertaking activities in addition to their contracts to ensure whānau were safe, fed and warm. Negative experiences with government and other non-Māori services led to women and frontline workers being wary of accessing them.

The Inquiry heard that it was not unusual for Child Youth and Family to take Māori tamariki into care without looking into the whānau situation and connecting with community agencies that may be working with the whānau. While some conceded this was necessary in order to keep tamariki safe, this was not always the situation. People spoke about mothers attempting to start new lives, only to have their tamariki taken off them because Police had been called to domestic violence incidents, even if these involved the enforcement of protection orders. Māori tamariki are often negatively impacted when they are cared for by over-worked and poor quality carers who go unchecked. People spoke of Child Youth and Family carers often being motivated by the money that comes with caring for tamariki. The Inquiry heard that tamariki often get treated poorly in care, not helped by there being no apparent support systems in place for those caring for tamariki with complex needs. Moreover, little support is provided for mothers attempting to create new lives or the recognition that some Māori whānau need additional support as they themselves are the products of child abuse and domestic violence and in some cases the State's

child protection system. The following wahine explained the impact of her childhood sexual abuse had on her being a mother.

*“One of the things I have to do is tell my children that, one, I can’t play hide and seek with them because I just turn into this anxious mess. The other thing is that they can’t surprise me. Try explaining that to adults sometimes. And I’m not very tactile. That’s really hard when you’re Māori, because everyone’s first instance is to kiss and hug you.”*

This is just one example of many that the Inquiry heard about. What it does is reinforce the need for recognising prior abuse on parents and other whānau members, and the very real need for support – not further punishment.

For Māori whānau, institutional abuse is disempowering, particularly when they are attempting to protect tamariki, but instead are treated like “a criminal”. It became evident to the Inquiry that when whānau are treated poorly, this frequently leaves them without options. Some staff in agencies have little empathy with Māori victims and as a consequence provide little or no support. Similar to other victims, Māori are also subject to victim bias with little accountability for perpetrators. Without a doubt, the Inquiry found that Māori mothers are often portrayed badly.

### **Funding of Community-Based Programmes**

A big problem, the Inquiry has recognised, is the under-resourcing of community-based programmes designed to “rebuild” whānau and community connectedness. A frontline worker told the Inquiry that efforts to grow healthy and resilient communities were thwarted by government policy and funding approaches and that the aim should be that,

*We don’t look to the government anymore. The government is actually not giving whānau and communities any money and support.*

Inadequate funding is worsened by short-term funding contracts (for instance, six month contracts) that prevent longer term, strategic and sustainable planning to occur. People also spoke about the impact this had on community frontline workers’ pay, with these workers being poorly paid despite carrying high workloads and being “over-worked”. Funding and resource constraints meant that community workers were not well paid compared to those who held similar roles in the hospital, for example. Lack of resourcing also impacted on frontline workers being able to attend professional development opportunities, because of their high workloads.

*“What our workers do out in a community they do for love.”*

*“And it gets really hard when you get loaded up, because the need is out there and so workers of course they want to respond, because they’re passionate about it. And yeah they get paid for it as well, but it’s hard. I think it is becoming harder and harder to be able to go to a network meeting and have some downtime and just find out what other programmes are happening and get enriched with some new ideas.”*

Community providers talked about needing to “stretch resources and funding”. For example, they often worked flexible hours, recognising that family violence doesn’t occur “Monday to Friday, 9 to 5”. The current competitive models in place are deterrents for collaboration between agencies, the Inquiry heard. However, despite chronic under-resourcing, we heard about innovations going on within communities that are building





*The thing that I've recognised works the most is kōrero (talk), awhi kōrero (talk that embraces what a person shares), whitihiti kōrero (talk aimed at change), allowing people to share their truth, and without judgement, and without being the fix-it person.*

Community development approaches do not necessarily focus directly on the subject of child abuse and domestic violence, but instead involve broader issues impacting on whānau, and importantly, developing community connectedness. The following frontline worker described how their service engages with Māori whānau, to gain their trust and to focus on the outcomes – “healthy and safe whānau”.

*I organise events and work with whānau and don't even mention family violence. We talk about healthy and safe whānau and bring people together, and keeping our children and mokos (grandchildren) safe. If you have that connection with your neighbours and communities and people going back to the marae, being connected with whānau, you're going to be preventing family violence because you start relationships and you start caring about each other more and that the spin-off is that. If whānau aren't coping then people can go in and help. If they don't want your help you can ring the Police and say, “Hey, we're not tolerating this sort of violence in our whānau now.”*

Other activities community providers initiate include supporting māra kai (vegetable gardening) in the community, which not only provides much needed food, but also is a way of bringing people together. These community providers identified that such activities not only provide needed kai (food), but also imparted the skills in growing

a communal garden and being self-sufficient. Additional activities also included helping with protection orders, advocating and negotiating with organisations such as Child Youth and Family and Work and Income New Zealand, and mentoring. The community approaches people shared were mana enhancing and enabled Māori affected by child abuse and domestic violence to develop relationships with others through activities such as whānau days. Those talking to the Inquiry acknowledged that smaller towns or cities were more willing to work in collaboration with other agencies and services, although size brought other challenges, such as small budgets.

### *Including Tane*

“What about our men?” One aspect that became obvious, with regards to an inclusive holistic approach to addressing child abuse and domestic violence within whānau, was the importance of providing support and development of tane. Māori frontline workers highlighted the importance of including tane in programmes, and the need to recognise that while tane may be perpetrators today, they have their own stories of being victims of child abuse, neglect and domestic violence. Healthy whānau is contingent on all members of the whānau healing, and that includes tane. One strategy, for instance that one community frontline worker talked about, was a tane who worked with other tane and boys.

*“One of our mentors, he's a bushman. He loves hunting and fishing and he's done the whole marae style thing. Once he gets that rapport and relationship with the fathers and the boys, especially our men, our tane, he actually starts taking them on hunting trips with him and his family and his boys. It's teaching them the old ways of how we used to be Māori, about sharing and giving, and he said it's about teaching his kids too. There are many of our Māori boys out there who missed out on the whole traditional way of how we used to do things.”*

It was also recognised that integral to addressing child abuse and domestic violence was the need for tane to have counselling and programmes to address their own mamae (hurt). Therefore, the Inquiry heard that Māori wanted not only more help for working with whānau, but also for those in prisons. One frontline worker explained the importance of addressing not only tane in prison for violence-related offences, but also their tamariki.

*I just think we need more help with whānau and with the prisons. Someone who went to prison for beating up his girlfriend or mother or whatever, they should have more courses in there for them. And then look at the kids, so who are his kids? The kids of men in prison need counselling, and some kind of early intervention. That's a way to get help while they're young, so they don't have to carry those kinds of scars until they're older and maybe they can make some kind of change.*

#### Trauma-Informed Holistic Approaches

Frontline workers stressed to the Inquiry the need for community programmes to use holistic and trauma-informed approaches that do not necessarily focus on child abuse and domestic violence per se. Instead, they may address presenting mental health issues, alcohol and drug issues, or mākutū (spiritual sickness) that impacts the wairua of whānau and its members. For instance, drugs and alcohol may be used to dampen or block the memories of a person's sexual abuse as a child, but in the process they contribute to them being abusive and/or violent themselves. It is most often the trauma, not some medical condition or inherent fault with a particular person, that is the source of child abuse and domestic violence and any accompanying drug and alcohol problem. The Inquiry heard that where child abuse and domestic violence are concerned, the response should not be about pathologising people, but rather addressing their trauma so that people are able to understand it, can develop new

ways of functioning and coping with it, in order to heal. The following frontline worker outlined the importance of reclaiming tikanga practices and avoiding pathologising Māori.

*“Because we're lost with colonisation, we've lost rituals, and we've lost some of these really important tikanga practices. We will bring these in and so we get a lot of matakite, as an example. And because of that loss in the link then they don't know where to go, because the kaumātua are kind of like really scared. And so and our suicide rates are really, really high, and I think a lot of them is because of the matakitetanga and stuff. So working with some of those sorts of aspects and stuff I don't know if it's really, really complex, but it's the kind of the way we are. So part of my mahi (work) I suppose is to try and work closely with the psychologists and people from the western world to understand that process for the whānau so that they stop pathologising. It is something they don't understand.”*

Part of this healing journey involves strengthening people's cultural identity, and healing their wairua. Therefore, traditional healing practices play an important role to re-balance the dimensions of the whānau and its members' lives. As one healer told the Inquiry, it is about unbalanced wairua and needing to heal the source of problems.

*“I balance the spirit; nobody else looks at the spirit. It gets out of balance. Wairua to me is water and fire. There's enough water to put the fire out, enough fire to dry the water. Ne? That's the balance of life to the Māori, the Pākehā calls it negative and positive, and Chinese call it yin and yang. Ours is wairua. The thing is you have to go to the source. You've got to go to the source of these problems. There are many problems, but they're not going to the source. They're not even getting near, they're not getting near. And usually it's a wrong source.”*

In addition to kaupapa Māori-based services, people recognised the need to use other services. People commented on the benefits of co-locating agencies in order to design “transformative” responses for whānau. This helps reduce some of the complexity that faces whānau wanting to address the child abuse and domestic violence they are living with. It also has the added advantage of establishing important relationships to benefit whānau, as the following frontline workers explained.

*“We are a small community, so we do know everybody. And everybody knows everybody. But the key for us I think is sticking to the kaupapa – that we’re not here to gossip, but here to share information to the benefit of their family.”*

*“Having our close networks working together collaboratively and I’m talking both government and non-government agencies including Child Youth and Family is vital ... So I can ease our family by saying, “Yes, I know there’s a history about CYFs they take children and break up parents, all that kind of stigma, but help me to work with her because we’ve got to do this. There’s a reason why you’ve got an open file here. I know [the case worker], I know how she works.”*

Frontline workers also talked about involvement of Police in whānau days and other community activities, to help improve the image of Police for young people and their whānau. For instance, one person talked about the Police officer teaching children to ride a bike and laughing with them, which helped to dispel the negative stereotypes about Police officers in that community.

### Leadership

Leadership grounded in kaupapa Māori is essential for providing services for Māori whānau affected by child abuse and domestic violence. Good team leaders were grounded in kaupapa Māori and encouraged innovation and flexibility.

*She doesn’t put us in a box and shut us off. She allows us to use our life experiences and our skills and our knowledge to go out there and do the mahi (work) that we need to do.*

Stretching resources and funding is an issue for many leading Māori provider services, with what appears to be under-funding of the services they deliver within the community. The Inquiry heard this was a particular issue for smaller communities. Māori talking to the Glenn Inquiry noted the need to provide flexible working hours, especially as leaders recognised that child abuse and domestic violence occurred 24/7.

*Family violence doesn’t happen Monday to Friday, 9 to 5. So flexible hours are needed.*

The Glenn Inquiry concluded that it is important for New Zealand to revisit some of the unhelpful and negative stereotypes of Māori that condone labelling and treating them badly. What is needed instead is a more compassionate approach, especially where tane are concerned. It is also crucial that Māori-based community programmes are adequately resourced, and the good work they are doing in communities with multiple whānau is recognised. Restoring tikanga into whānau and communities is crucial to addressing child abuse and domestic violence for Māori, as the following wahine promotes.

*Tikanga: it gives women safety, it gives children safety. But it’s going to be very hard when we have a racially divided country to actually do this. I think the thing that can actually unite our country is this [tikanga], because it’s beyond cultural or racial stereotypes, it’s beyond divisions. That’s our future.*

### *Summary*

- New Zealand needs to acknowledge that child abuse and domestic violence are everyone's problem and adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach.
- We need to create safer family environments with strong, positive role models.
- We need to listen to, believe and support children or mothers who disclose abuse and violence in their lives.
- A national strategy is needed to educate the population and change social attitudes.
- Current systems and services, especially the legal and justice systems, need to become more responsive to the needs of victims and more proactive on the issue.
- Services must be adequately resourced to support families and address violence and abuse in sustainable way, on the scale required.
- The safety of women and children must be paramount in the provision of such services.
- While Government alone cannot 'fix' the issue, it needs to facilitate change across services and systems at multiple levels.
- Kaupapa Māori-based services, using trauma-informed, holistic approaches, have a huge contribution to make to creating safer whānau and communities.



# SECTION 5

## *Taking action*



# SECTION 5: Taking action

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Child abuse and domestic violence is a significant national problem that has an intergenerational impact on children, their families and communities, and New Zealand society. It is clear from the people who came forward that child abuse and domestic violence is widespread and has staggering costs for victims, their families, whole communities and society as a whole. Each year, thousands of New Zealanders experience the physical, mental, spiritual and economic consequences of violence.

The people who spoke to the Inquiry strongly asserted that we need to refocus on preventing violence from occurring by monitoring, tracking and following-up on reports of violence, and by conducting ongoing research to identify factors that increase or decrease the risk of violence. People also stated that there is a need to further develop and rigorously monitor and evaluate innovative prevention strategies, and support the widespread use of evidence-based prevention approaches. This critical work could help us more effectively and efficiently prevent child abuse, domestic violence, sexual violence, family violence, and other forms of violence. It is also evident that many of the contributing risk factors for domestic violence can be identified in childhood and adolescence, and awareness of these factors needs to be incorporated into prevention and/or goals.

To better understand what needs to change within the many systems that serve those impacted by child abuse and domestic violence, we have devised a set of suggestions based on the voices of the people who came forward to speak to the Inquiry. These suggestions are based on key issues that are complex and multilayered. They require substantial changes to societal, institutional and community perceptions, organisations and systems, and families. We suggest seven key issues for consideration that might help New Zealand better meet the needs of those impacted by child abuse and domestic violence.

<b>R</b>	<i>Refining documentation to eliminate inaccuracies, fragmentation and errors</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>Early intervention</i>
<b>S</b>	<i>Skilled workforce – it only takes “one champion” to make a difference</i>
<b>P</b>	<i>Prevention via education, especially children, to interrupt the cycle of violence</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>Equitable approaches – helping one, helping all</i>
<b>C</b>	<i>Community action – how can communities intervene?</i>
<b>T</b>	<i>Tying it all together – inter-agency collaboration</i>

### R: Refining Documentation to Eliminate Inaccuracies, Fragmentation and Errors

*I get the fines to my address for him, for his crimes against somebody else. Because my address [is] his last known address. It's like my God, in this day and age can you not link things? Can you not see that I have a protection order against this guy? Because I don't know when it's [a letter] turning up. You're just coming right and then bang, it pulls the rug from under your feet again. So the last time it happened I rung the Ministry of Justice and said, "Look, I don't understand how this is happening." They asked me to open the envelopes, which I did because they needed the PPI numbers off them, and then I read that it's for assault on another female. It took me back to square one.*

Governmental agencies and community groups who work directly with victims of child abuse and domestic violence play an important role in screening, treating, and documenting people's stories and experiences. A thorough and well-documented record of child abuse and domestic violence can strengthen domestic violence cases when they are brought to court and/or when urgent

action needs to be taken. Effective documentation should carefully and factually record evidence confirming and/or establishing that abuse and/or violence has occurred, who was involved and what the outcomes were. Carefully documented records of the abuse and/or violence may be useful to victims of child abuse and domestic violence in a variety of ways following their disclosure. As such, the way that information is documented, handled, transferred and shared (deliberately and inadvertently) is of utmost concern.

People emphasised the importance of documenting abuse in detailed, fair and accurate ways. Many participants spoke of their records containing flaws that made them unacceptable for use as evidence in court and other legal proceedings. Some spoke of the ways their responses to the violent experiences were misrepresented in the documentation. Others made comments about how the documentation was used inappropriately, including who had access to it.

Many of the people, especially women who were victims, perceived that they were described judgmentally in official documentation, including being called “needy”, “neglectful” and “not a good Mum”. Many of the people found these descriptions distressing. One frontline worker stressed, in a written statement to the Inquiry, that inaccurate documentation and/or untruthfulness were not necessarily uncommon. She wrote,

*During my time [at CYFs] I continued to raise issues, about dishonesty (falsifying records and misuse of resources) and sometimes unsafe practice putting my children at risk.*

Another woman spoke of her shock at how the Police had minimised her abusive situation. She argued the importance of victims and complainants getting to see and/or affirm the accuracy of recorded information. She stated,

*“Three years later I managed to get a hold of the Police notes about what happened. They didn’t write down anything I told them. They wrote down, “Domestic issue, he locked her out, she locked him out.” I’m like, “He wasn’t living at the house.” By that point he’d been living a month somewhere else, it was my right, it was my home, to have the door locked. I think that Police need to write good notes when they have dealt with a domestic violence issue. They should be writing down what they said to you, they should be giving it to you later on that day, or the next day saying, “When I’ve written my notes, here’s a copy of my notes that you can check that what you have said to me is true, or is right, that I’ve got it correct.” And you could sign it and give it back to them so that it goes on their file correct because three years later down the track, the stuff that these Police have written just shocked me. I’m like, “Oh my God!” It has been several times when I called the Police over things and they’ve gotten things wrong. It’s been put in the file, and do you know what? That’s been used against me because they’ve gotten things wrong.”*

Other people also spoke about how their domestic violence experiences had been recorded in ways that minimised their severity. One person spoke of a Family Court Judge’s careless words.

*“Oh yeah it’s violence, but it’s at that bottom end of violence that I see in here.” You know, “It’s not really that important.” He said that. And things like, in his minutes that I threw it away ages ago because I didn’t want it in my space, “Oh, at the risk of frustrating Mr X...” It’s just like, who cares if he’s frustrated? He’s been proven to be violent – it doesn’t matter if he’s frustrated or not..”*

A number of people also spoke about frontline workers who were more concerned with remaining impartial and protecting the confidentiality of information than the victim. However, in an effort

to be “neutral,” some use language that may undermine the victim’s legal case, and in some cases, even support the abuser’s case.

One woman stated,

*It’s like they believe they’ve got to sit on the fence. They’ve got to be seen to be neutral. They keep saying that to me, “We’ve got to be seen to be neutral.” And I keep going, but I’ve never heard anybody say this to me. Child protection and domestic violence are not neutral. It is about abuse of power.*

Another stated,

*And the process is you have an affidavit, you write your story. But there’s a process and a framework to write it, and then the lawyers write it up in legal language so all the legal people understand it. But the context isn’t completely provided. And that heart-wrenching experience that you’ve had is really watered down, they make it sound like one individual thing not that heart-wrenching year, five years, ten years, twenty years, thirty years, fifty years that you’ve had. It has really just come down to a few words, you know? Lawyers are trained to be unemotional.*

However, the most significant issue impacting people who spoke to us was the problem of inaccurately recorded information, as illustrated in the following person’s statement,

*“I didn’t get my personal information from CYFs, I didn’t know I could until last year and I applied for it. And I’ve since learned that the information that CYFs gathers has a potential to be hugely incorrect, hugely. It’s shocking, from the birth dates to things said to where degrees were, where school was, where our preschool was, just everything. They had said all kinds*

*of stuff that didn’t happen. We weren’t aware that we had a CYFs write up for those two first separations, when I got the parenting order. There was one write up, a whole page on how someone had come around, we weren’t there and the child’s whereabouts were unknown. There was one saying we were married when we weren’t, there was one saying I went to a Catholic girl’s school when I haven’t. They wrote up an entire page of all kinds of crap that I didn’t even say. None of it was bad, but all of it was terribly wrong. Like I had a BA, but I have a Masters in Psychology, and just all kinds of inaccurate information. Put that together with the two pages from the previous two split ups, presumably because I had made a Police statement and that I got the parenting order, that’s maybe how they got it. And apparently there was a visit and on all three occasions they’ve written the whereabouts of the child was unknown, so it looks almost neglectful, on my part.”*

Other people also raised concerns about a lack of care in the ways their personal information was recorded and/or communicated. One person stated,

*“CYF’s reporting is really sub-standard, and it’s terribly upsetting. I felt like I was going nowhere for a long time and I was just asking them for any direction about what to do next. What I found later when some of the documents turned up in the huge pile of documents from court, they’d been doodling while I cried and the doodles were still on the paper, which is really unprofessional.”*

According to one mother there is also a distinct lack of consideration given to the rights, preferences and perspectives of children in matters concerning them. She commented,

*“My children have a right not to be hurt, they have a right to have their opinion listened to in accordance with their age, they have a right to participate in decisions. And yet their voice in*



*this psychological report has just been dumbed down and it's not in the CYF's reports at all."*

Another issue pertained to the inaction, "slow-to-action" responses and/or systemic failings of some frontline workers. Examples include unnecessary delays in officially serving a protection order.

*On the one occasion when they did visit him, following my complaint of verbal abuse, they advised him the protection order was in place. However, as they failed to document that visit, the abuse continued until he had officially been served.*

This same person consequently decided to take extra action to document her perspective of the ongoing violent incidences. Her efforts to further protect herself were not taken seriously by a Police worker.

A lack of communication and information-sharing between agencies was a constant source of frustration, particularly for the victims of domestic abuse. Many of the victims who talked to the Inquiry commented that agencies often misplaced or lost information. The following quotes illustrate the consequences of such errors. One mother of a son who had been sexually abused stated that the,

*Family Court had administrative issues and lost our documentation which meant he had more time unsupervised access than was allocated.*

Another domestic violence survivor stated,

*I had extended reports written by [a] special service unit, but only one page turned up to court. This meant that the court had to proceed on incomplete information.*

Other agencies are sometimes perceived as unwilling to collaborate in the best interests of their clients.

*"I was understandably upset at them for losing his file for three months. Consequently, by the time it was found and my reapplication to the court for the anger management to be reinstated, he had left his only known address and so could not be served. I am supposed to give them his address. Apparently the Family Court cannot get information from WINZ, why not? Why should that be the case when IRD and WINZ swap more personal information?"*

There is clearly a need to design, implement and monitor more effective systems regarding the documentation, sharing and storage of client information. One frontline worker, who was also a domestic abuse survivor, suggested the need for "a centralised registrar documenting all involvement a family has with all agencies". She gave an example of how this might be useful.

*"One family I worked with, there was suspected abuse of children and domestic violence, however, there was no evidence. Being an NGO we had no mandate to ask further questions with others. At a later date I was meeting at the local hospital and was able to see the files of the family, which showed regular visits to A & E for injuries to the children, and the reasons for the injuries were odd. When I discussed this with the nurse she looked further at the files and said nothing had been forwarded for further investigation. If there was a central file for families then this could have all been pieced together. However, I understand that human rights dictates there will be no big central watchdog for all citizens."*

A number of people suggested other ways to improve and bring together information so that it is documented more thoroughly and utilised more effectively. It was also evident in the people's stories that there are a number of gaps in frontline

workers' training and practices, indicating that certain "elements of safety and risk aren't well understood". In particular, specific actions that a number of court officials took were perceived to increase the risk for the victim and children, rather than decrease it. For example, sending divorce papers with a woman's new address where she was in hiding to her abuser. Two banks and one phone company divulged another victim's personal details to her perpetrator, resulting in him randomly turning up at her house when she had tried to keep her location secret. One Police worker argued for more opportunities for specialised Police officers to,

*Collate and analyse police reports on domestic incidents so we can identify individuals who are a higher risk to victims and partners and identify any risk issues for both the victim and police attending any domestics.*

Another Police worker also argued that,

*There is a lack of consistency across districts in [the city]. For example, a case may start in [one district], then be forwarded to the [another district], where the victim has to go through another process of telling their story. Often, files are not transported thoroughly from court to court in time for hearings, which means that Justice's response is very patchy and inconsistent.*

A number of other frontline workers contended that there is a need for better information-sharing between CYF, Family Court, Police, WINZ, IRD, doctors, psychologists, and Women's Refuge. One worker suggested establishing agreements to share information rather than having a centralised database. These could include,

*"An "at-risk" register that is viewable across districts so services can see who is around. We would have to be very careful about who goes on this register, and under what circumstances, taking into account confidentiality and who is likely to have access to the records. But this register should be available, at the very least, between branches of the same agency. This will also improve information on which agencies have been involved with a given family."*

Obviously, better guidelines for effectively documenting reports of child abuse and domestic violence are needed, and should be an important part of a coordinated, community and nation-wide effort to combat the issues. Many victims of child abuse and domestic violence do not contact advocacy organisations, shelters, Police or prosecutors of their own choice, and many do not do so until the abuse and violence has become quite serious and life-threatening. However, many victims will seek emergency and routine medical care for themselves and their children, and send their children to preschools or schools.

Therefore, frontline workers in these "first-contact" fields must carefully and thoroughly document all injuries and details of the abuse as a means of beginning and recording a 'story' about a person's journey towards leading violence-free lives. Documenting injuries and events may be critical for later efforts to obtain help through the legal system. Evidence establishing a pattern of violence can be also critical in protection order proceedings, criminal prosecutions, and child-custody disputes. Documentation should allow any frontline worker associated with the victim to take into account the effects of the abuse over time, and should help to ensure that he or she receives ongoing care.

## E: Early Intervention

*I worry about the kids are getting a bit of this and a bit of this. What I'd like to see happen is an agent or whatever happened, where people, where other agencies ring up, give the name of the kid, talk about what interaction they've had but just to this one agency. And then that this one agency works on a flag system. That would be my ideal world.*

Early intervention involves responding, as soon as possible, to the needs of people who are impacted by child abuse and domestic violence. The aims of early intervention are to put services in place and offer support before situations get worse. It can also help individuals and families move on from their difficulties to lead happier, healthier and safer lives. Early intervention might involve one service provider or it might involve a number of different agencies and service providers, all working together to support a family. The ultimate outcome of early intervention is that it promotes better long-term life outcomes for victims and their families and in doing so, prevents them from needing more intensive and higher cost services in the long run.

Effective early intervention can transform the lives of people impacted by child abuse and domestic violence. By helping young people find jobs and appropriate accommodation, by helping parents back into work, by establishing stable routines for children at school and by reducing the barriers to living in violence-free contexts, individuals and families can lead productive lives. The most effective early intervention considers the whole family and puts in place as much support as necessary, for as long as it is needed. Additionally, the early identification of victims, survivors and perpetrators can help relevant services to target resources appropriately. Frontline workers need as much information as possible to design and implement interventions that are useful for individuals and/or whānau-specific.

The people who came forward to speak to the Inquiry identified a number of early intervention and prevention strategies that might be further developed to deliver better support to people impacted by child abuse and domestic violence. These strategies include:

- **Reviewing** the ways the government allocates funding to the range of services, making sure there are sufficient resources to identify and target needs at the earliest stage possible, preferably while children are still at school and/or when a victim first discloses his or her experiences of violence or abuse. When a person's life is disrupted by their exposure to violence, we need to act quickly to prevent things getting worse. The importance of targeting children while they are still at school was reinforced by one person who stated,
 

*“I wish I had known at high school how to recognise those early signs of violence. It would've made a difference. I would have acted sooner.”*
- **Improving early identification processes** by ensuring that assessments and agency plans focus on the needs of the whole family and the ongoing needs of perpetrators, rather than individuals only. Most people do not live, suffer and persevere in isolation and, as such, to be truly effective in the long term, services must positively impact everyone within that context.
- **Providing all the information** those affected by child abuse and domestic violence need to understand the 'roots' of their violent situations and 'routes' to begin to rebuilding their lives. Too often, those affected receive incomplete or minimal information to assist them manage their situations. Victims and perpetrators need information about their:
  - past to help them understand the origins of their violent or abusive situation, for example through counselling

- present to help them make sense of what their immediate needs are, for example through medical notes and/or police reports, and finally
- future so they can rebuild their lives and restore their personal wellbeing, for example court orders and/or new accommodation arrangements.
- **Monitoring agency or service delivery and outcomes** to ensure they are collaborating and improving outcomes for families and referring people, where needed, to specialist services or crisis interventions. One person told the Inquiry that they would like to see agencies clearly identify what they specialise in to help clients select the right agency for them. Moreover, to genuinely understand how agencies impact clients, each agency or service needs to seek regular feedback from the clients themselves. No one can speak to their experiences like they can.
- **Bringing together** services via ‘single points of access’, so that families do not have to re-tell their stories to a range of different people, and to ensure that different frontline workers work together effectively to meet the needs of those affected. The Glenn Inquiry heard from most people that improved inter-agency collaboration will ensure that victims and perpetrators receive adequate help to detangle the complexities that impact their lives.
- **Ensuring the right system** is put in place for those families who have multiple and complex needs and provide additional help, especially for those families who have repetitive or worsening behaviours despite interventions. We do not help anybody by “wagging our finger or shaking our heads and saying ‘they can’t be helped’.” Every time violence or abuse reoccurs, someone’s life is permanently altered. Therefore, a new or modified plan of action must be put in place to help that person. It is important to understand that victims do not stay with violent partners or abusers by choice;

they stay because of their partner’s intimidation and control, and as a result they see no alternative pathway for themselves or their children because they fear the very real, and potentially deadly, consequences of leaving.

- **Making sure our frontline workers have diverse skills** so they can support and deliver the right help to individuals and families impacted by violence and abuse. As discussed by many of the people who came forward, it is imperative that all frontline workers, including lawyers, doctors, family court judges, teachers, and other health professionals receive ongoing professional development and education to ensure they expand their knowledge of the kinds of interventions and helping services that are needed and are available to those affected by violence. This point is discussed in more detail in the following section.

### S: Skilled Workforce – It Only Takes “One Champion” to Make a Difference

*“It’s a mutual two-way relationship, so instead of being professional and leaving your life at the door, you bring it in with you. You be real. This is something you’ve experienced. It might be helpful to share a little bit. Not the dark stuff, but the stuff where the hope came from. A few tears shared between you are okay, that’s real. And it’s really about the connection and helping, not giving them the answers or fixing or finding solutions, but talking through and helping them explore their journey. “What was it like for you? How did that feel? What sort of things are in the way? What does your future look like? How would you like to get there? What are your supports? What are the steps that you feel you need to take to get there? How can we support you with that?” And it’s really walking alongside, letting them shape and draw their own journey, rather than us saying, “Okay, you need to do this, this, this, and this, and you’ll be good.” And it’s a long-term thing. This may be*

*something that we're working with people for a year, that's okay. And the way you'd know that the service works really well is when they no longer need you. So they feel that they have supports in the community, their confidence has gone up, their self-esteem is building. They look at you and they think, "Just the fact that you're here and you got there. I don't even actually need to hear your story, just to see you're here, and to know that you've been through this gives me hope"."*

All people who come into contact with child abuse and domestic violence need to walk alongside, and learn from, compassionate experienced frontline workers in order to live safe, violence-free lives. It is clear from the stories the Inquiry heard that there are many genuine people working in all parts of the system.

The frontline workers who made the biggest difference in the lives of individuals living with child abuse and domestic violence were those who "truly listened – without judgment", "went the extra mile" and "who were willing to talk about aroha – bringing their hearts to their work". These workers strived to make a difference, and were described as "having heart and commitment". Victims of domestic violence need opportunities to speak openly about what has happened to them without fear of offending, shocking and/or being silenced by another person's feelings of awkwardness. One person believed that victims needed opportunities.

*Victims need to speak about their truth, and not to be judged. To not feel like they are making other adults uncomfortable. And that's what I see in our survivors. They don't speak their truth because they know it makes other people uncomfortable. As damaged as they come to us, they still have the ability to consider other people's feelings.*

A number of frontline workers, many of whom were survivors of child abuse and domestic violence themselves, mentioned that they were most effective in their work when they were able to share their personal stories with victims, "going beyond" the job requirements in order to reduce the "shame and stigma" of telling their story. Frontline workers who positively impact the lives of victims "have not given up" and "don't play labels or statistics", instead treating each person they come into contact with as a human being rather than just another case. It is clear that such intuitive work requires knowledge about child abuse and domestic violence, experience and a degree of empathy. Many frontline workers stated how important it was to instinctively recognise warning signs that something's "not okay" and to support victims holistically and not to just focus on their violence, because violence is a only one part of their complex lives. Many victims of child abuse and domestic violence also stated that having an experienced case worker in the field enabled them to talk with someone who understands and is able to help them and inspire them with hope. In the words of a frontline worker,

*So you can have a highly academically qualified workforce, and there's nothing particularly wrong with having some of that, but it's not much use if it's only that. It's the personal relationship development that's really important. But you also have quite a number of people in the sector who have lived experience, which also brings its own beauty, but it needs learning alongside that, of an academic nature, of a sort of analysis nature to really get the benefit of that fully for others.*

Many of the people who came forward— victims, survivors and frontline workers alike – argued that the systems serving individuals and families impacted by child abuse and domestic violence will not be truly effective if the voices of people with the “lived experience” are not listened to. Those people who spoke to the Inquiry were emphatic about the importance of “the system” learning from those people who had been failed by the system.

It is clear that individuals and families impacted by domestic violence and abuse require a “real” approach that enables frontline workers to draw on their life experiences, skills and knowledge to do the work needed. The idea that frontline workers should refrain from telling their own stories to the people they are working with was perceived as “a load of shit”. Frontline workers telling their personal stories of child abuse and domestic violence were seen by many of those people who came forward as providing valuable insights that could not be gained from textbooks and classrooms. For instance, some frontline workers argued that sharing their experiences conveyed that they genuinely understood their clients’ (victims and perpetrators) experiences and represented hope that people could live without violence. One frontline worker stated that she was in a “powerful position where I can change someone’s life. It is one life at a time”. According to another frontline worker, victims of child abuse and domestic violence need “a listening ear, not a referral to another agency and a handful of brochures to read”. She further stated,

*“When you’re dealing with women and domestic violence, you actually must appeal to her need first before you launch into conversations like, “Did you try to talk to him?” I think by the time they’ve left, whether it’s two years, ten years or twenty years, the last thing they need to hear is, “Did you try to talk to him?” I understand what they’re trying to do, but you know people are at different stages in their journey and you really need to know where to start. But first you need to listen to their journey. And I*

*find, and this might be because they’re [other frontline workers] busy and they’re so snowed under or they’re so under-resourced that they’re not actually listening. They just, over some period of time, they start to profile you. And it’s even more destructive when the experienced practitioners start to pathologise you.”*

Of particular concern to a number of people who talked to the Inquiry was the perceived naivety of inexperienced frontline workers regarding the realities of living in fear daily. Many people spoke with frustration about the number of frontline workers who had “simplistic solutions for really complex situations”. One of the repeated irritations for victims was being asked repeatedly by frontline workers, “Why don’t you just leave?”

*I don’t think that people really understand the pain and the trauma, child sexual abuse, especially if it’s father-daughter incest. It’s just diabolical, I think it’s minimalised. I don’t think people understand. I don’t think professionals understand. And I’m really annoyed that they keep on trying to give me these stupid little fixes that are hopeless. And what voice have you got? Here [talking to the Glenn Inquiry] I’ve got a voice but nowhere else, I can’t say it anywhere else. You know?*

The victims who spoke to us offered a number of reasons why they remained in their violent relationships. Their varied reasons provided us with an insight into the emotional conflict and confusion that operates in violent and abusive circumstances. Many of the people feared for their own safety, or that of their children, parents or extended family, and sometimes for their pets. Others had concerns about a perceived lack of family support, social isolation and/or were worried about an earlier rejection by family members for not leaving, or in some cases, if they left the violent relationship. Nearly all victims expressed concerns about how

they would meet their financial and accommodation needs once they left the relationship, and many also felt helpless in terms of accessing and successfully navigating the available services or supports. Some people talked about disappointing experiences when they accessed support services and/or feared that the services may have obliged them to disclose embarrassing intimate details of their abuse and violence.

Some people reported that they were coerced by frontline workers into following a course of action which they did not believe would be effective; or worse, would put them and their children in further danger. Many people reported feeling that frontline workers felt that they were to blame, or worse, did not believe their stories of abuse. Others mentioned persisting in the relationship in the hope that the violence would cease and/or remaining in the marriage to best serve the interests of their children. Many victims talked about suffering from severe depression, stress and other emotional effects associated with the abuse and violence they endured.

Particularly concerning were the number of women who spoke about postnatal depression. These psychological stressors left many of the victims with a sense of worthlessness and hopelessness. This left them without the necessary psychological resilience to take independent and purposeful action, let alone navigate a difficult and unfriendly system to get help. The enduring sense of shame, embarrassment and responsibility for the violence caused them to suffer in silence.

Responding to domestic violence, helping victims and their children increase their safety, and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions is complex work. Such work necessarily involves drawing on the lived experiences of qualified frontline workers. We use the word “qualified” in its broadest sense – to unapologetically infer that textbook knowledge is not enough on its own. Each frontline worker needs an opportunity to walk alongside experienced

individuals to better understand the intricacies, power dynamics and myths surrounding child abuse and domestic violence. Frontline workers also need the opportunity to merge their textbook knowledge with “other people’s real-life ‘Once Were Warriors’ realities”. Only then can frontline workers work meaningfully with traumatised individuals, children and families in ways that “don’t take for-granted their actual realities”. Responsive practice must be about constructive engagement between knowing individuals and restoration of people’s mana and self-belief in their ability to live safe, violence-free lives.

It is important that the services that look after people impacted by child abuse and domestic violence are staffed by people who are competent, knowledgeable and non-judgmental. Victims need to feel like their voices are heard, their stories believed and that the system is there to support them for as long as it takes. They also need to know that they deserve more than the abuse and violence that they have lived with. The current system does not communicate these messages to victims. Every individual who is impacted by child abuse and/or domestic violence deserves an advocate; “one champion” who will help them to navigate the system so that they can live safe, violence-free lives.

### **P: Prevention via Education, Especially Children – Interrupting the Cycle**

The stories told by those people who came forward illustrate that child abuse and domestic violence often occur in the same family and are linked to several consequences for all family members, as well as members of the larger community. Children exposed to domestic violence are at greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse, early pregnancy, and criminal behaviour than those raised in homes without violence. People who talked to the Inquiry about children from violent homes, talked about some showing signs of more aggressive behaviour, such as bullying, and some becoming violent themselves. Prevention and early intervention

efforts can be effective in reducing child abuse and domestic violence behaviour. Prevention via education must occur on a variety of different levels.

The Inquiry has concluded that education needs to occur in the general New Zealand population with a clear focus on ridding the inaccurate stereotypes and myths that appear to thrive in our society. Not addressing the seemingly mass ignorance that exists about child abuse and domestic violence will perpetuate the non-responsiveness and abuse that is inflicted upon victims, and continue to ensure that perpetrators are left unaccountable for their abuse and violence. To this end, there must be a zero tolerance of child abuse and domestic violence, and it must become everybody's problem if the shocking statistics that exist are to be addressed.

Moreover, all professional groups must have a better understanding of child abuse and domestic violence and be prepared to be responsive to both victims and perpetrators. Allowing misinformation or a lack of information to continue will do little to address New Zealand's child abuse and domestic violence problem. Such professional education must also include inter-agency and inter-professional collaborative practice.

Another key area in urgent need of attention is education for children and young people. Children and young people are always affected when abuse and violence occurs within the family, either by living amid such behaviour or its destructive aftermath or as victims of violence themselves. As such, children and young people need to be explicitly taught about what child abuse and domestic violence are and how to protect themselves. They need to be able to identify the warning signs for both types of abuse and recognise the accompanying psychological violence, as the following person indicated.

*Communication skills need to be taught to new entrants in all schools because the lack of proper communication is the root of most of the issues of child abuse and domestic violence. We HAVE to teach these new skills to the children of today because that is the quickest way to create instant change in a population over the shortest timeframe. I believe that if proper communication courses were implemented for 5 year olds, (even from 3 year olds at Kindergarten entrance level) by the time 10 years has passed the community as a whole would have changed for the better so much so that you and I would be able to see and measure the effects.*

Some of the victims who spoke to the Inquiry believed that waiting until Intermediate and Secondary School is "too late" to be having these conversations, and that children should be introduced to these topics while in primary school. These people believed that programmes in schools need to teach children what's good and what's not good and what's acceptable and what's not – this would help them identify that their experiences of child abuse and/or domestic violence is not normal. Young people need clear information about physical, psychological and sexual abuse, and domestic violence. Children also need to "know that there's good touching and bad touching" and whom they might safely talk to if they have concerns. A number of people stated that until they took part in a school-based sexual health programme they didn't even know they were "being groomed for abuse". As one person stated,

*“Our kids need to understand and be taught that it's not all right, because it goes down by generation. It's a cycle that happens all the time and it's got to come to a point where that cycle needs to be broken or it's going to keep on happening. I was bashed when I was young, just because I wouldn't look after my brothers*



*and sisters and stuff, or didn't do the dishes – silly stuff. I'd never touch my kids the way I was. There was some times where I had to go to school with bruises and stuff, could barely walk and have to lie to the teachers about what happened. They're not stupid, but I never ever want my kids to feel like how I felt and to be embarrassed not to wear my skirt up properly because I had to cover my legs. I didn't know it was wrong. I thought it was happening in all homes."*

There are many children for whom violence and abuse are an everyday occurrence. One teacher commented that,

*"For many of the kids that I deal with there is horrendous abuse happening. But they have never, ever told anybody because it's not been safe."*

Currently, there are 'Keeping Ourselves Safe' and other programmes taught to children at school. However, the success of these programmes depends largely on the skills and knowledge of the teacher and the ability of the school to follow through appropriately should children disclose that they are victims of violence and/or abuse. As uncomfortable as it is for some children to hear about the harsh reality of child abuse and domestic violence, it is important that they have an opportunity to discuss acceptable and unacceptable physical and sexual behaviours with a trusted adult. One teacher talking to the Inquiry mentioned the increasingly early age that children are confronting problems, and the need for earlier education and intervention.

*"A lot of these kids would have been better off if they'd had some support younger. Because a lot of them are quite entrenched in their messy lives that are happening at intermediate age and also the whole puberty thing's starting to happen. So all of those pressures that we thought happened at high school are now happening when they are younger."*

It is clear from the people's stories that many of them did not know that what was happening to them at home was wrong until they mentioned it to a friend or it was raised in a health lesson at school. That "painted a picture" of what child abuse actually was. Children need to be "taught the words" to articulate their concerns about what is happening to them. They also need to know that their concerns will be dealt with in a mindful way that does not result in their whole world being turned upside down. For many children, disclosure resulted in the loss of their parent and their removal from their family.

*Children need to be aware of their rights. They need to be aware that they will be kept safe. Like, for example, because my dad did what he did, it doesn't mean that I'm never going to have my dad again. It means that he can get the help. So people need to be educated in the benefits of preventing abuse.*

When children do make disclosures as a result of school-based programmes, it is important that the school acts in an immediate, supportive and safe manner. It became clear to the Inquiry that many teachers and schools do not know the procedures for reporting disclosures of abuse. One parent stated that when her child disclosed abuse at school, the school reacted inappropriately, putting the child at further risk.

*"My son said to me that what he heard in the Keeping Yourself Safe programme was what was happening at his dad's house, straight out. So he spoke to me about it, then he spoke to his teacher about it, and then the school made a half-assed attempt to do something about it. They don't know how to deal with it. It's like the hot potato; they didn't know what to do. They had this great program, but then they didn't know how to deal with it, when everything bubbled up to the top, then they didn't know how to deal with it."*

It is important that children who disclose their abuse or the domestic violence happening in their homes have wrap-around, co-ordinated support and access to unlimited counselling. In this way, the intergenerational cycle of violence can be interrupted. Teachers are in a powerful position to identify the signs of abuse.

*Teachers are the people that see the kids every day. Even if families cover up, the kids are at school every day away from their families.*

What is needed is better pre-service teacher education about identifying and acting on the signs of abuse in children. Teachers need better support and more explicit directives about how to report abuse and support children through the repercussions of that reporting.

Teenagers were identified as a particularly “high risk group” because of their increased exposure to online influences, the prevalence of cyber-bullying and increased access to drugs and alcohol. One frontline worker commented on the vulnerability of this particular group.

*The time that they're most at risk is 13–18 [years]. They're the highest risk group, they have the least experience of the health system, they're most likely to be assaulted, they're less likely to look for information, and they're less likely to access the services, even if they do exist.*

A number of frontline workers and parents called for easier access to support services specifically designed for young people using violence and those exposed to it. There are also gaps in the existing support systems, the Inquiry heard. For instance, the lack of a benefit for teenagers aged 15–17 years who need to escape abusive situations or who are transitioning out of state care. Many instead turn

to sex work for survival because they can't find a job, or afford safe accommodation. Consequently, many young people also “tag onto much older boyfriends” that further abuse or exploit them.

There was a call for more youth mentors who can help young people to learn pro-social skills that will help them deal with conflict including “using energy in sports and exercise as opposed to violence”. We need to make it especially easier for young offenders to access comprehensive support because as one person told the Inquiry,

*Quite often these young people have horrendous stories themselves and it is a really short time from when somebody is an abused child to when somebody is an abuser.*

This person went on to reiterate the short timespan between children transitioning from an abused 10–12 year old to an abusing 14–16 year old.

The Inquiry also heard a call from people who came forward for parenting courses, particularly for young mothers and fathers. There are currently limited education programmes and/or support services for young parents, particularly in terms of teaching them about appropriate communication with their children and healthy violence-free home environments. One frontline worker stated,

*“We really need to school young parents more I think. We need to school them, they're the ones looking after the kids, and there's no handbook. You have a child born, a baby, there's no book with it. You know what I mean. If you don't get advice from your parents or your family, if you haven't got parents and family, who do you turn to?”*

It seems clear from people's stories that teen mothers are commonly the focus of initiatives for teen parents, and teen fathers are often overlooked. However, it became clear to us that teen fathers can

be the most difficult group to find and to engage in services. A critical principle to keep in mind when working with teen fathers is to have a positive attitude towards them as young men and as fathers. One frontline worker recommended programmes to empower not undermine them – not all men are rapists or violent.

### E: Equitable Approaches and Targeted Programmes

*We need to move away from this delivery of predetermined content and become much more personalised in our provision of services. And obviously our ability as a whole system and as an agency to respond effectively to crisis is really, really important. And to be supporting all people to overcome family violence, as has already been indicated, requires a range of different resources and supports over time.*

The Glenn Inquiry heard that both men and women may be either victims and/or perpetrators of child abuse and domestic violence within families, households and relationships. However, the Inquiry heard that violence committed by males within such settings is much more prevalent and generally more severe than that perpetrated by women. However, a number of people who came forward to speak to the Glenn Inquiry expressed concerns that particular groups do not have access to fair and equitable treatment, and justice within the services offered in New Zealand. These groups include: men, new immigrants, women and children from minority ethnic and/or cultural groups, and women who are the partners of gang members.

### Men

Many of the people who talked to the Glenn Inquiry were concerned that there was a lack of support for men, compared to the support women had access to. One person stated,

*“How about giving our men some support in order for them to get back to being our protectors not our perpetrators? Fix the whole family, not just bits and pieces, the whole whānau unit, even if they’re not getting back together again. Don’t leave him out there stranded, just to go on to abuse the next woman. Fix the whole family.”*

People believed that New Zealand needs male refuges too and/or “respite houses” so that men have somewhere safe to “chill out and reflect” rather than being removed from their homes and processed by the Police with nowhere to go. A “respite space” is especially important where men have alcohol and drug issues and/or when men need somewhere safe to spend time with their children. The Inquiry heard that many men, including those who are extremely violent toward their partners, will attempt to make changes to their behaviour in an effort to retain contact with their children. We often heard that while men need to be held accountable (including paying child support and learning to respect their children), retaining contact with their children after they had left their family homes was often fraught. Men spoke of using other people’s couches, sheds, freight crates, or living in mixed flatting arrangements that made it unsuitable and difficult for their children to visit them.

*“They need to be held accountable. These men have children, they need to pay for them, and they need to learn to respect them.”*

A number of frontline workers also observed that there is limited acknowledgement of the risks to men when families are separated as a result of domestic violence. The risks for men included attempting or committing suicide, developing mental health problems and/or inflicting further violence upon their partners. There were some concerns that the Police are “quick to side with women and arrest men” and that many men feel frustrated that they “have to prove they are not the perpetrator”. New Zealand clearly needs better systems of support for men impacted by violence AND men who perpetrate violence. One frontline worker pleaded,

*We have got to think about ways that actually inspire men to reach out and receive support that encourages and leads them to believe that actually there is an alternative to violence.*

### Māori

Māori speaking with the Inquiry stressed the need for relevant approaches that are grounded in tikanga Māori and that re-introduce the principal importance of children and their mothers.

*We need a new way, I think, a better way of actually dealing with abuse. We need a Māori system that actually holds the safety of our children as paramount. The worst has been our Māori people in Child Youth and Family. I mean, if I was able to use those four letter words, shocking.*

In reality, for most whānau, the current “mainstream” approaches to addressing child abuse and domestic violence are not working, especially as they focus on individuals and deficit-based approaches. The Inquiry heard that often these

services were inflexible and imposed unrealistic goals and timeframes on whānau, and that the people who work within these services can be disrespectful and judgmental. The following frontline worker explained the difference between a Māori-based approach of successfully working with the entire whānau (including men and children), but stressed the need to offer longer term support.

*“We understand and we honour that [the restoration of the children with the whānau] and we love the fact we can close our files, but you’ve still got to make sure they’ve got the tools and the resources and supports to be able to sustain and maintain. If they have a slip that they know they can ring and ask for help. So, I suppose our present work is mainly that, sustain. Trying to sustain the well families we are creating, and putting the positive into their education and schools has been another part.”*

Specialist Māori service providers using holistic kaupapa Māori and whānau-based services that use collective approaches are crucial for working with Māori whānau where child abuse and domestic violence exist. Such approaches are grounded in Māori worldviews, and acknowledge the importance of restoring tikanga (Māori cultural practices) within whānau, and the mana of wāhine, tamariki and tane.

*“The greatest support that we can offer is actually to bring children back under the cloak of tikanga. I honestly believe that there’s no greater safety than in following that path, because it takes society from being individual little boxes into actually being communities.”*

The Inquiry heard from a number of Māori frontline workers who talked about the innovative and culturally-based work they were undertaking, which were often different from those generally offered. Nevertheless, demand on these services and chronic under-resourcing creates high levels of stress for frontline workers and managers of these services meaning burnout is always a risk.

## Migrant Women

A few people commented that there is a need for more targeted and specialist services for migrant women. There are a plethora of negative consequences for families who are displaced from their home cultures and the subsequent disruptions can lead to family problems. Many migrant women do not have residency, and as such are ineligible for domestic violence services, legal aid and/or help from agencies such as ACC. In some cases, migrant women are unable to leave their partner as their immigration status is dependent upon their partner's work visas.

Frontline workers need to be responsive to the complexities unique to this group of vulnerable women. Many immigrants have had negative experiences with Police in their country of origin, and/or fear being deported if they complain to the Police. In addition, should they find the strength to separate from their violent partner, they are not likely to receive child support because the IRD will not "chase up payments for a non-New Zealand resident".

Special mention was also made of the cultural differences evident among sexual abuse victims from diverse ethnic groups. For instance, one frontline worker discussed the particular difficulties for Middle Eastern women who fear that their families will be ostracised by their communities if they disclosed sexual violence. Another frontline worker mentioned that many young Pasifika women fear disclosing sexual abuse because they are concerned that their brothers and father will "seek vengeance and get in trouble". Consequently, a number of the people who spoke to the Inquiry mentioned the need for a more diverse workforce to cater for an increasingly diverse clientele. Another frontline worker stated,

*"With regard to CYFs, the Probation Service and Corrections, these organisations need more people from different cultural arenas that can meet the cultural needs of the main client base. In my organisation I am the only 'brownie' on the team. We need a little bit more cultural sensitivity because for a lot of my clients CYFs are an everyday part of their life and they're like, "Oh f\*\*\*! They gave us this bitch that doesn't know anything about our culture. How is she supposed to understand?"*"

## Partners of Gang Members

Finally, attention must be paid to victims whose partners are gang members, as many domestic violence agencies and resources do not account for or provide adequate services for them. Their experiences differ from other women – they have specific needs associated with seeking help and attempting to leave a violent relationship and the 'gang'. They are not eligible for help in many places, most importantly Women's Refuge. Many women are refused help from various services because they may refuse to cooperate with the Police and/or refuse to testify in court. Services must be compelled to find ways to help victims who are the intimate partners of gang members because, unlike other victims of domestic violence, the partners of gang members often suffer serious levels of ongoing physical and sexual violence during their relationship that includes other gang members. Their risk of further harm increases after reporting the violence and even more so when they attempt to end their relationship, as they not only have their partner's retribution to contend with but that of the 'gang' as well. People spoke of a woman's constant fear of retaliation not only from her partner but also from his fellow gang members.

If New Zealand is to effectively prevent domestic violence and equally protect and serve all victims, we must better serve and be inclusive of these groups. We need to think about ways we can more equitably distribute funds, resources and services to support and attend to their unique needs.

## C: Community Action – How Can Communities Intervene?

There are big gaps in public knowledge and not enough thoughtful consideration of the reality of living with violence and abuse, and its effects on its victims. Acting in response to child abuse and domestic violence is a nation-wide responsibility because it happens in all sectors of New Zealand society. As such, **“it is everyone’s problem”**. The government, and society at large, needs to urgently acknowledge the scale and depth of the problem of child abuse and domestic violence. This widespread ignorance results in stigmatisation and further disempowerment of victims. It also creates further barriers to securing safety and justice for those affected. Finally, the ongoing lack of community knowledge and action increases the likelihood of abuse and violence being carried forward into future generations because its cycle is allowed to remain intact by being kept secret and silent.

Many people spoke about the neighbours who knew but were too afraid to intervene or who willingly turned away when “Dad gave Mum a whack”. The silence, the averted looks and the attitude that we should “mind our own business” must stop. Blaming the victim because they “don’t leave him” ignores the brutal and complex realities of the lives many women lead as illustrated in the following quote.

*“A lot of community education is needed too, and a paradigm shift around answering those questions, “Why does she stay?” Because, what’s there for her if she leaves? We know that 54 percent of domestic-violence murders are committed by ex-partners. So, leaving isn’t a safe option, people. It’s a deadly one. But it is hard getting the community to understand that. We need to get those around her, so that they’re responding in a much more supportive way to her and responding to her survival mechanisms. Not responding to what they think needs to be done.”*

Every time we ignore the signs of child abuse and domestic violence, we inflict another form of abuse upon that man, woman or child. Many victims of child abuse and domestic violence reported feeling further psychologically abused when their violence was ignored, “condoned by family” and/or left until there was more evidence. One person stated that,

*In a funny way it’s actually more damaging than being physically abused, because not only are you are fighting the abuser who’s actually physically abusing you, but you’re also facing a lot of people who are actually ignoring you or disbelieving you. It makes you question your own mental sanity.*

Another person commented that while people’s silence enables them to avoid tricky conversations, it forces the victims to stop talking about it too. She commented,

*Even today my parents can’t speak about it with me. If I bring it up they very quickly change the subject. Or I become a victim again. Some element of it is my fault, according to many people around me. And I know that those people have never probably experienced it, so can’t, or aren’t in a position to make comments or to judge.*

We must look for more effective ways to connect with and educate our communities. In this way we can be alert to changes in the behaviours of vulnerable members of our communities. We need to increase public awareness and response by growing opportunities for communities to connect, whilst simultaneously educating our communities, so that they can identify and intervene to prevent child abuse and domestic violence from occurring. We need to create awareness within our communities of the need to protect children.

We need to engage them in building cohesive networks that keep children safe. Communities need to become empowered to protect vulnerable men, women and children. In the words of one participant,

*“I wish society in the next 20 years could come around and understand where we’ve come from, and try and have some grace and heart about it, and start moving forward to really supporting and caring about each other as neighbours, whatever, whoever, wherever we come from. We need to have this universal kind of desire for a better society than there would have to be lots of education about why we are the way we are and what needs to happen for it to be different.”*

The Inquiry heard from people that communities need to take responsibility whereby every adult community member challenges themselves about what role they can play in protecting vulnerable children and people. As one person said, “It’s time we had a culture that refuses to tolerate violence to children and their families”. Another person pleaded for New Zealanders to move beyond the notion of “dobbing them in” and argued that this “negative phrase intimidates ordinary, otherwise responsible people”. This person further argued that this phrase should be replaced with “interrupting the unacceptable” when responding to the plight of people affected by child abuse and domestic violence.

Everyday New Zealanders must move beyond “preconceived ideas of what domestic violence is and isn’t” because, as the Inquiry shows, the scars of child abuse and domestic violence go much deeper than “visible bruises” and “broken bones”. We must also dispel the race and class-based myths about who commits and who are victims of child abuse and domestic violence. We also need to break down community misunderstandings around the idea that violence and abuse does not occur in areas deemed ‘high socioeconomic’. As people coming

forward stressed, this is an inaccurate perception because abuse and violence does happen in middle-class Pākehā suburbs.

Public awareness about the dynamics of child abuse and domestic violence needs to improve vastly in order to decrease the misrepresentation, myths and stigma impacting victims. Widespread promotion and community education is needed so New Zealand has a better informed public who see the need to “help” those in need, including men who are violent. One frontline worker stated,

*The shame and stigma that is so attached to family violence prevents people from seeking help. And we need to become much, much better at projecting images of hope, images of potential, images of possibility, and create platforms for people that have successfully overcome family violence to share their stories as sources of inspiration for others.*

Increased community awareness would also encourage additional accountability for offenders. Those affected by child abuse and domestic violence do best when they are believed and their stories are honoured by those with whom they come into contact. One frontline worker argued that

*“We need to get behind victims and we need to get them to the Police. We need to get them to Shine. We need to get them to Rape Crisis. Whoever. We need to stand behind them and get them there. We all need to get involved. If it’s not safe to get involved, then we need to anonymously report crime.”*

Many people who talked to the Inquiry said we need more “public awareness campaigns”. In their view, the television campaigns publicising that domestic violence “It’s Not OK” and “White Ribbon” have been helpful in a number of ways. These kinds of social marketing campaigns are needed to change social norms and ensure that

everyone knows where to go for help. One person mentioned that, “Seeing those ads gives you strength and might make kids feel like they could talk to a safe adult.” A White Ribbon worker commented that, although he cannot accurately measure the impact his community advocacy has on the individuals and families he speaks to, “what is clear is that the more I talk, the more people hear what I say, and the more people get help”. Another participant stated,

*The ‘It’s Not OK’ campaign has actually changed social norms, like attitudes, they’ve done that monitoring and tracking over time and that’s only been 8 years. I think in 10 years we could really turn this around with really good messaging, working with parenting groups, working with SKIP, right from littlies to adults. I feel really like this is hopeful.*

### T: Tying It All Together – Inter-agency Collaboration

*“The system is black and white. I fully understand there is a need for rules. But it is so black and white, while so many of us fall into the grey areas. Or because of disastrous previous dealings within the systems we give up. We are battling enough in our lives to just survive. The systems make us feel like giving up on trying to get well. Just recently I told my doctor I would be better just hitting my head against a brick wall than trying to deal with the systems in place currently.”*

In order for frontline workers to develop and sustain an appropriate response to child abuse and domestic violence, they must have the support of the organisation in which they practice. Additionally, given that victims necessarily interact with multiple agencies, there is an urgent need for a coordinated organisational response to tackling child abuse and domestic violence. Frontline

workers acting alone simply cannot meet all of the needs of victims, their children and their families. The optimal response requires the coordinated efforts of multiple services and all members of the community. However, one person articulated the fiscal and structural barriers to genuine inter-agency collaboration. They stated,

*“Government departments, even in a country as small as New Zealand, are handicapped by changing policies, rapid staff-turnover and politically motivated frenzies under the name of new directions. They cannot compete with small towns and distinct districts to operate on a scale that is manageable, local, and familiar. A child protection board operating under a local, elected council is likely to be more efficient in looking after its own patch and being accountable to its own community.”*

*“We look at agencies like the Ministry of Justice who fund programmes. But if we have a non-governmental service that stops someone from further perpetrating violence, so they don’t need to go on a mandated programme, isn’t that something that Justice or someone should want to fund? The government’s still very tied into its funding model which stifles some creativity from the sector and it’s quite difficult. We really need the space to be creative and to be responsive to people’s needs. And that comes back to the point of leadership as well. We need leadership within the sector that can facilitate transformational change. Not just at an agency level, but nationally and at all levels.”*

The Inquiry heard that many established child abuse and domestic violence protocols and processes fail to provide the necessary support to improve the lives of the victims. In fact, many of the protocols actually revictimise people and prevent them from accessing appropriate support. They focus largely on reactive approaches that “come too little, too late” for many victims. As the following person stressed, there is a need for earlier intervention.



*Okay well what I see is, social welfare and now CYFS or Paula Bennett's mob, they're the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, do you know what I mean? They always have been, kids have died, little kids have died because the state hasn't intervened earlier, or one of their trained social workers hasn't picked up on things because they're just not clever enough to pick up on things, and as a result kids die. We've got the worst teen suicide rate in the world, in the world. That's disgusting. I feel ashamed being a New Zealander.*

Consistent themes arose from the Inquiry discussions with regards to a perceived lack of training, insufficient specialist analysis of safety and risk, poor practice and victim-blaming among many workers in government agencies. People also commented on the lack of response and/or poor response for victims of violence that puts them and their children in further danger. People suggested that all frontline workers working in organisations involved with children should be required to undertake child protection training in partnership with other agencies to ensure consistency of care and delivery. In this way, the various groups of frontline workers can come to understand each other's respective roles, develop necessary networks, and discuss how they can work together for the good of those affected by child abuse and domestic violence.

Many frontline workers spoke of the ongoing funding issues, particularly for non-governmental services. According to many of them, the government's current funding models make it a competitive and stressful context for agencies. Many of the costs have increased for agencies, but the funding has not – especially from the Ministry of Social Development. Senior managers in agencies mentioned that it is “hard to employ good qualified staff when they are not being sufficiently funded”. These funding issues “are deep rooted and affect

how individuals and agencies interact”. It is clear that the competitive funding environment prevents agencies from working collaboratively in the best interests of those impacted by child abuse and domestic violence.

In summary, the effects and links between child abuse and domestic violence must be understood. Before frontline workers can make a difference in the lives of those impacted by child abuse and domestic violence, adequate intervention strategies must be in place. Early-life care agencies, like Plunket and schools, must ensure their teachers and carers are prepared with appropriate levels of knowledge and skills to identify and act upon indicators of child abuse and domestic violence.

Communities too must be prepared to “step up” to protect everyone's right to live safe and violence-free lives. Those affected must be invited to restore their lives alongside multidisciplinary teams including government agencies and services, non-government organisations and other community-based providers and domestic and sexual violence specialists. Only when communities, frontline workers and their organisations start working together in more collaborative ways will creative and innovative responses to eliminating child abuse and domestic violence emerge and thrive.

## Conclusion

The Glenn Inquiry went to the people of New Zealand seeking ideas and solutions for addressing child abuse and domestic violence in New Zealand. *The People's Report* is the result of many people coming forward – victims, perpetrators and frontline workers. It represents a unique insight into people's stories of surviving child abuse and domestic violence.

People came forward to voice their concern that child abuse and domestic violence did not only occur in some sectors of society, but happened in “good” and “wealthy” Pākehā homes. At times their stories are disturbing but it is important to remember this is their reality and their horror trying to survive not only their dangerous abuser, but also the system that is supposed to help and support them. People came forward to share their stories with the Inquiry with the hope that we would listen to them and that some good would come from opening up and telling how it was for them to live through and survive child abuse and domestic violence.

The Inquiry acknowledges that there are groups not represented in those coming forward to talk, which is a limitation of *The People's Report*. Further work is needed to understand the experiences and realities of those who have disabilities, Pacific and Asian peoples, those in gangs, and those in same sex relationships for instance. However, among those many people who did come forward there was a wide diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

The Inquiry heard from people that New Zealand has a cultural acceptance of violence, and binge drinking that was often associated with child abuse and domestic violence. We also heard that there is generally poor knowledge and understanding about child abuse and domestic violence which enables it to thrive within our communities and families.

*The People's Report* also outlines a number of major failings in the current system to address child abuse

and domestic violence. These include inadequate funding of services, particularly community-based services, and a lack of collaboration between the various agencies and services that those affected come into contact with. People often told us that, despite using official complaint processes, they in fact had no right of complaint or redress because staff in government departments especially “looked after themselves”. While most people commented on improvements in Police attitudes and responsiveness to child abuse and domestic violence, the Inquiry was concerned to hear about what can only be described as the dysfunction that exists within our Family Court system, which includes judges and lawyers.

People indicated to the Inquiry that there needs to be zero tolerance for violence in our communities, and that the media has an important role to play in promoting a non-violent society. New Zealand has to become more children-focused and friendly, because if we look after the children (who are New Zealand's future) we are more likely to keep them safe and prevent the inter-generational effect of child abuse and domestic violence. The current attitudes and cultures, particularly the acceptance of violence and binge drinking, need to shift from being normal to being abnormal.

The Inquiry heard that people want a national strategy whereby the government is the facilitator of change. Such a strategy must be multi-level and multi-system, as outlined in this report, and it needs to address poverty. It must be based on equity so that the social differences in New Zealand are accounted for. We are not “all the same”, and therefore taking a “one size fits all” approach will not work. For instance, Māori who talked to the Inquiry made it very clear that a kaupapa Māori approach was needed that was whānau-centred and strengths-based. Such an approach promotes healthy whānau and community relationships and connections.

A national strategy also needs to include requirements around the improved education of professionals and frontline workers, and require better inter-agency collaboration. There also needs to be a major review of the courts system and Child Youth and Family so that the gender bias against women and mothers is eliminated and victims can get the necessary assistance when they are traumatised and need help to be safe and secure. Importantly, people need help in overcoming the trauma and abuse they have endured. They need access to free counselling that is not time-limited, because child abuse and domestic violence erodes people's spirit and psychological wellbeing. It can't be fixed in six short sessions. Finally people need to have a code of rights and an independent forum whereby they can have their grievances heard and addressed.

This report provides a sound understanding of the issues faced by those affected by child abuse and domestic violence. *The People's Report* should provide guidance to those working with those who are at risk of, or who are suffering child abuse and domestic violence.



If New Zealand is to reduce its shocking child abuse and domestic violence statistics, we can no longer turn away from those people and their families who themselves cannot turn away but have to endure its long-term and harmful effects. As the song, *The Turning Away* asks: “Is it only a dream that there’ll be no more turning away?” This reflects the people’s hopes and dreams when they summoned their courage to come and share their stories with the Glenn Inquiry and New Zealand.

## THE TURNING AWAY

On the turning away  
From the pale and downtrodden  
And the words they say which we won’t understand  
“Don’t accept that what’s happening  
Is just a case of others’ suffering  
Or you’ll find that you’re joining in  
The turning away”

It’s a sin somehow  
Light is changing to shadow  
And casting its shroud over all we have known  
Unaware how the ranks have grown  
Driven on by a heart of stone  
We could find that were all alone  
In the dream of the proud

On the wings of the night  
As the daytime is stirring  
Where the speechless unite in a silent accord  
Using words you will find are strange  
Mesmerised as they light the flame  
Feel the new wind of change  
On the wings of the night

No more turning away  
From the weak and the weary  
No more turning away from the coldness inside  
Just a world that we all must share  
It’s not enough just to stand and stare  
Is it only a dream that there’ll be  
Is it only a dream that there’ll be  
No more turning away?

**By Pink Floyd  
‘Momentary Lapse of Reason’**

# SECTION 6

## *Appendices*



# SECTION 6:

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Panel and Skype Interview Questions

- Tell us about who you are, and why you are here.
- What are the things that worked well for you in helping you deal with your situation?
- What are the things that didn't work well for you?
- What would have made the most difference in you?
- What key things would you want included in an ideal system to address child abuse and domestic violence in NZ?

In addition the following questions were asked, if appropriate to the person's circumstances:

**A. If a child abuse victim:**

- As a child, what things or person worked well to help you deal with your situation?
- What were the things that did not work well for you?
- As a child, what would have made the most difference to you?

**B. If a domestic violence victim, who was/is also a parent:**

- Are you a parent or previously a parent?
- What things, if any, helped you to parent your children in your situation?
- What things made it difficult for you to parent?
- What things would have made a difference for you in parenting your children?

## Appendix 2: Who Shared Their Experiences?

Some people were happy to provide additional information about themselves and others were not.

People had the right not to answer any particular questions. A summary of the demographic information we have is provided below.

### People Affected by Child Abuse and Domestic Violence

Demographic		Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Female	84%
	Male	16%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	New Zealand Pākehā/European	58.0%
	Māori	25.0%
	Pacific	6.8%
	Asian	2.3%
	Other	8.0%
	No response	
<b>Age Group</b>	16-20 years	1.1%
	21-30 years	9.1%
	31-40 years	22.7%
	41-50 years	34.1%
	51-60 years	25.0%
	61-70 years	4.0%
	71-80 years	1.1%
	No response	1.1%
<b>Disability</b>	Yes	2.3%
	No	97.7%

### Frontline Workers

Demographic		Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Female	80.6%
	Male	19.4%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	New Zealand Pākehā/European	44.4%
	Māori	36.1%
	Pacific	0%
	Asian	0%
	Other	8.3%
	No response	11.1%













*If the heart of the harekeke was removed,  
where would the bellbird sing?*