



Social Service
Providers
Aotearoa

**Submission to the
Joint Venture Business Unit on the
National Strategy & Action Plans to
Eliminate Family Violence & Sexual
Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand**

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Summary of Recommendations

SSPA agrees with and supports the vision and ways of working set out in the 'Invitation to Contribute'.

SSPA calls on the Government to ensure that the National Strategy and Action Plans are both aspirational and practical, able to be put into action that results in tangible, meaningful change for the better for children, young people, families and whānau.

All the focus areas identified in the 'Invitation to Contribute' are important for eliminating family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand.

SSPA calls for the National Strategy and Action Plans to eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention in Aotearoa New Zealand to:

- 1) Include a central focus on prevention of family violence and sexual violence, recognising that this is crucial to fostering long-term, intergenerational change and a safe and inclusive violence-free Aotearoa.
- 2) Include a central focus on children and young people, and their families and whānau.
- 3) Include a Priority Action Plan with a specific focus on eliminating family and sexual violence for children and tamariki, young people and rangatahi, to ensure all children and young people in Aotearoa can grow up safe, consistent with their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and for tamariki and rangatahi Māori, consistent with their status as tangata whenua and as mokopuna within their whānau, hapū and Iwi. At pages 5-6 of this Submission we outline the specific features that we urge should be included in this Action Plan.
- 4) Reflect and be grounded in the wisdom of maatauranga me tikanga Māori, and give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in practice. Support equitable, non-discriminatory outcomes and initiatives grounded in the aspirations and needs of whānau, hapū and Iwi that help to address intergenerational trauma rooted in the on-going impacts of colonisation.
- 5) Reflect approaches that facilitate genuinely joined-up processes and support in practice, in recognition of the holistic nature of people's lives.
- 6) Be connected into and align with the approaches being developed in the Future of Social Sector Commissioning project (commissioned by the Minister for Social Development and Employment), to ensure joined-up funding for services that prevent and respond to family and sexual violence.
- 7) View the workforce that will support the implementation the Strategy and Plans both broadly and inclusively. This includes recognising that NGO social service providers (e.g. not just those formally recognised as specialist family and sexual violence organisations) have an essential role to play, especially working with children, young people, families and whānau both in prevention and response.
- 8) Take an expansive and holistic view of those who can help to support the vision to be a reality, at all levels of the community. Alongside this, emphasise that a collective response that is community owned and driven is needed, with government enabling preventative and responsive action through, e.g. adequate and joined-up funding.

Introduction & Background

1. Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the National Strategy and Action Plans to eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention in Aotearoa New Zealand.¹ SSPA believes that this kaupapa is of national significance for all people and communities in our country, including children, young people, families and whānau. It is important for the people of Aotearoa New Zealand, both now and intergenerationally.
2. We have a collective opportunity to make systemic shifts that result in tangible, positive differences in the lives of children, young people, families and whānau. SSPA is ready to support and contribute to these shifts, to see safer, more inclusive and thriving families and whānau, where children and rangatahi are always treated as the taonga that they are.
3. Furthermore, SSPA believes that there is an urgent need for a nationally mandated strategic approach to the elimination of family and sexual violence in Aotearoa, supported by practical action plans. Therefore, we very much welcome the Government's commitment to making progress on this kaupapa, and the commitment shown by Hon Marama Davidson, Minister for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence, to have a national strategy and priority action plans in place by the end of 2021. We also acknowledge the mahi of Jan Logie MP, Interim Te Rōpu and the efforts of those working in communities around Aotearoa over many years to support progress on this kaupapa.
4. SSPA calls for the National Strategy and Action Plans to place considerable emphasis on the situation of children, young people, families and whānau. We see this as currently lacking in the documents that have been published to support the 'Invitation to Contribute'. We also urge that the knowledge, expertise and experience of children, rangatahi and people with lived experience, and of SSPA members who work with these groups, strongly influences the development of these documents/frameworks. In providing this submission, SSPA seeks to support and amplify the input our members have contributed/are contributing through the engagement process.
5. Therefore, our submission contributes to the engagement process facilitated by the Joint Venture Business Unit (JVBU) by highlighting firstly:
 - a. Children, young people and their families and whānau;
 - b. The crucial role of NGO social services in the elimination of family and sexual violence.

Our submission then turns to hone in on two of the Focus Areas identified in the 'Invitation to Contribute', namely:

- Focus Area 2: Bring Government responses together; and
- Focus Area 6: Develop ways for Government to create changes.

¹ https://mcusercontent.com/f6315e2ca243cd241d814da98/files/a38cf444-d48b-9876-0777-b6c05028df54/An_Invitation_to_Contribute.pdf

6. Our written submission to the engagement process sits alongside and is complementary to the input of SSPA members already shared with the JVBU at the online hui for SSPA members jointly facilitated by SSPA and the JVBU on 22 June 2021, and any written submissions/other input that individual SSPA members make to the JVBU through the engagement process.

About Social Service Providers Aotearoa

7. SSPA is a membership-based organisation, representing some 200 non-profit organisations from around Aotearoa, based in regional and urban locations.²
8. SSPA members are funded by government to deliver social services in our communities every day, with a predominant focus on children, rangatahi, families and whānau. Our affiliate members are organisations that deliver social services for these people, and organisations and individuals who work in areas aligned to the interests of children, young people, whānau or communities.
9. SSPA's vision is that Aotearoa's NGO social services are sustainable, making a positive impact every day in our communities, supporting children, young people and whānau to thrive now and into the future. SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa's social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.
10. Because SSPA members are working every day with children, young people, families and whānau who have experienced or are experiencing family and/or sexual violence and the trauma associated with this, we are well-positioned as a peak-body to contribute to the shaping of the National Strategy and Action Plans focusing on this kaupapa.
11. SSPA members are actively working across all parts of the family and sexual violence prevention and response spectrum. They work with children, rangatahi, men, women, families and wider whānau, and often holistically with all or more than one of these groups.
12. We strongly believe that the prevalence of family and sexual violence affecting children, families and whānau must be addressed, and ultimately needs to be eliminated from Aotearoa New Zealand. Prevention mahi is of central importance in this regard, and must be infused throughout all approaches to eliminating family and sexual violence, including family and sexual violence response efforts.
13. SSPA believes that elimination of family and sexual violence – or alternatively framed, the growth and normalisation of a national culture of inclusion, safety, wellbeing and violence-free living – is achievable in our country. However, much like the approach New Zealand has taken to eliminating COVID-19 from our motu, it will take all of us. Eliminating family violence and sexual violence needs to be a collective effort, with collective ownership. This needs to start in communities, Iwi, hapū, whānau and

² Find out more about SSPA at www.sspa.org.nz Our Strategic Plan 2021-21 can be found at https://sspa.org.nz/images/SSPA_Strategic_Plan_2021-23_Final_version_for_web.pdf

families, and be effectively enabled and supported by Government, NGOs, private businesses and organisations.

Children, young people and their families and whānau

14. The prevalence of family violence and sexual violence affecting and among children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand is well-documented. Its pervasive nature means that it has become the norm for far too many children and young people growing up in Aotearoa today.³
15. Due to the persistently high rates of child abuse, family violence and child neglect in Aotearoa New Zealand, SSPA believes that the National Strategy and Action Plans must place a strong focus on the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families and whānau. This is one key way that New Zealand can seek to uphold the right of every child to live free from violence, which is a right that every child is entitled to under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁴
16. SSPA members are working every day with children, young people, families and whānau who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing family and/or sexual violence. This includes with children and young people and whānau members who may not first access our members' services due to family or sexual violence. However, family and/or sexual violence is almost always present or a feature of their experiences and trauma. The majority of our members are working to support children and young people who are engaged with the care and protection Oranga Tamariki system, and therefore see up-close the detrimental and life-altering impacts of family and sexual violence on children and rangatahi.
17. Given the prevalence of family and sexual violence affecting children and rangatahi in Aotearoa, the National Strategy needs to be specific about this and needs to be supported by a dedicated Action Plan focused on our youngest generations. The Action Plan needs to be grounded in New Zealand's duties and obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Given that New Zealand has a Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy,⁵ the National Strategy and Action Plans also need to be well-aligned to this and there should be clarity over how these documents/frameworks fit together in practice.
18. More specifically, SSPA urges that an Action Plan focusing on children and young people:
 - a. Understands children and rangatahi holistically and intergenerationally, considering all aspects of their lives and their place within their families, whānau and communities both now and into the future;
 - b. Recognises the need to start to build inclusive, non-discriminatory and safe cultures and relationships early in children's lives, e.g. with preventative,

³ E.g. as most recently highlighted in the 2021 Survey of Christchurch Girls' High School students: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/445663/students-often-stay-silent-after-being-sexually-assaulted-survey-finds>

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> See Article 19.

⁵ <https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/resources/child-and-youth-wellbeing-strategy-html>

nationally supported educational approaches around safe and healthy relationships and inclusion beginning from early childhood and continuing throughout adolescence;

- c. Is strongly informed by what children and young people say and have called for relating to family and sexual violence, and the views of families and whānau with lived experience of family and sexual violence;⁶
- d. Includes, alongside practical actions relating to all children, practical actions to support the elimination of family and sexual violence from the lives of groups of children and rangatahi that are evidenced to currently experience FVSV at higher rates, including children and rangatahi with disabilities, tamariki and rangatahi Māori, and Rainbow children and rangatahi;
- e. Considers the experiences and particular needs of children who are living in single parent families, those who have parents with mental health needs and/or drug and/or alcohol addiction issues, and of children and young people who are parents themselves, including both young fathers and mothers;
- f. Aligns and connects with the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (in particular the Outcome area: Children and young people are loved, safe and nurtured),⁷ and national approaches to addressing underlying drivers of family and sexual violence, including inequality, family poverty, discrimination and racism; and
- g. Is clear on how progress will be tracked, including, e.g. aligning with the indicator metrics developed in relation to the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.⁸

NGO Social Services

19. SSPA draws attention to the need for the National Strategy and Action Plans to view the workforce that will support the implementation of these plans both broadly and inclusively. It is also important that both government and the wider social sector acknowledges that the family violence and sexual violence prevention and response

⁶ Child and youth voices and views on this kaupapa from children and rangatahi in Aotearoa already exist, e.g. the What Makes a Good Life report by the Office of the Children's Commissioner <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/What-makes-a-good-life-report-OCC-OT-2019-WEB2.pdf>; Youth2000 Survey Series, including

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75ccef37259122e59aa/t/5fbac2c9b41d97178886e285/1606075090004/Youth19+Sexual+and+Reproductive+Health+Report.pdf> and

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75ccef37259122e59aa/t/5f338e4cfb539d2246e9e5ce/1597214306382/Youth19+Mental+Health+Report.pdf>; One for the Boys series <https://www.renews.co.nz/series/one-for-the-boys>; and Te Mātātaki 2021 <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Te-Matataki/Te-Matataki-Report-2021.pdf>

⁷ See: <https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/resources/child-and-youth-wellbeing-strategy-html#section-5>

⁸ Including, e.g. the What About Me Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021 baseline data

<https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/measuring-success/indicators/feeling-safe> and

<https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/measuring-success/indicators/feeling-safe>

<https://www.whataboutme.nz/>

'sector' goes much wider than organisations and agencies that have this as their sole/main focus.

20. SSPA members, although not all working solely in the family and sexual violence space, work with children, rangatahi, families and whānau for whom a large proportion have experienced, are experiencing or are at risk of family and/or sexual violence. Often these people will first access NGO social service support due to another presenting issue, e.g. housing issues; family breakdown issues; budgeting. However, in the course of building up trust and rapport with a social service providers' kaimahi, family and/or sexual violence and associated trauma is often disclosed. Social service providers then end up in many instances working with the child or person to address these issues, too. This highlights that family and sexual violence does not happen in isolation, and the National Strategy and Action Plans will be strong if they recognise this reality.
21. Similarly, NGO social services are often the first organisations to identify the risk of family and/or sexual violence in a family or whānau, and are therefore able to act preventatively to stop or reduce the risk of harm occurring. Many NGO social services work on family and sexual violence prevention and response with a wraparound approach that views the family or whānau as a whole, and seeks to work with each part of the family or whānau group to ensure long-term, sustainable change and strengthened families and whānau.
22. Many NGOs and Iwi social services working in this holistic manner ground their mahi in maatauranga Māori and have best practice models which can be shared and utilised in more communities around Aotearoa, but this is dependent on funding. Ensuring that NGO social service providers are able to access adequate funding to undertake this mahi is important as a feature of the National Strategy and Action Plans, alongside specialist violence prevention/response NGO social services. Addressing the silo-ing of funding is crucial here (as discussed later in this submission).
23. We also note that there needs to be alignment between workforce expectations, e.g. relating to workforce competencies, for NGO social services and provider organisations. Currently, there are multiple competency frameworks which can result in confusion for kaimahi working in these spaces. The National Strategy and Action Plans could help to align these.
24. Alongside the role of NGO social services, we encourage the National Strategy and Action Plan to take an expansive view of those who can help to support the vision of a violence-free Aotearoa to be a reality. This collective, community driven approach needs to include the places and people that children and young people, families and whānau engage with every day – such as educators, coaches, health professionals, hairdressers, barbers, etc. Innovative partnerships could also be explored, e.g. between social service providers and beauticians and barbers. Such initiatives involving these parts of the community have proven effective both in New Zealand and overseas to-date and could helpfully be utilised more.⁹

⁹ E.g. see: <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/christchurch-barbers-bid-to-stop-family-violence-recognised/3BXOVKUCZIW7MQST5GMY5C4WXE/> and <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/11/beauticians-brazil-trained-signs-domestic-violence>

Focus Area 2: Bring Government responses together

25. People and whānau are best supported by integrated community services grounded in local communities and informed by the aspirations and needs of the whānau, hapū, Iwi, families, children and young people that they serve.
26. Such community-based services can deliver outcomes that support people to recover, thrive and prevent harm from happening in the first place when they are enabled by government agencies that are working closely together to reduce barriers to support, and to increase safety (including through jointly funding services and initiatives). This is an important area to focus on to ensure services meet the needs of children, young people, families and whānau, both in preventing and responding to family and sexual violence.
27. Currently, NGO social service providers working in the family and sexual violence prevention and response space as part of their mahi are often engaging with multiple government funders. This adds layers of time and complexity, for organisations that are already stretched and time-poor due to levels of demand and resource scarcity.
28. Different government agency approaches also currently exist; whereas some funders are open to flexible funding arrangements to enable providers to be responsive and holistic to support families and whānau, others tend to be more rigid in the ways that they provide funding in this space.
29. One aim of bringing government responses together should be to address some of this unnecessary layering, silo-ing of funding and lack of a joined-up approach from government. This should be directed towards delivering outcomes that are genuinely responsive to family and whānau need, solutions that are locally-grounded and create space and encourage collaboration between service providers. Implementing such approaches should enable responses that see families and whānau holistically, creating long-term, sustainable violence-free outcomes.
30. In this regard, SSPA notes that there is currently progressive work underway being led by the Ministry of Social Development Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora and Oranga Tamariki to improve the commissioning of social services across Aotearoa.¹⁰ This work, which has been commissioned by the Minister for Social Development and Employment¹¹ is seeking to address current concerns about funding, procurement, monitoring and evaluation.
31. SSPA's Chief Executive Officer is a member of the Project Board for this mahi and believes that the work underway should ultimately lead to better outcomes for NGO social service providers and the children, young people, whānau and communities they work with. This includes those who have experienced family and/or sexual violence or who are at risk of these forms of harm.
32. We would like to see government agencies collaborate at the practical level to ensure progress on the Social Sector Commissioning (SSC) Project is enduring and joined-

¹⁰ <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/planning-strategy/social-sector-commissioning/msd-social-sector-commissioning.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid, at p.6.

up across agencies, and that the National Strategy and Action Plans for the Elimination of Family and Sexual Violence are interconnected with the approaches being developed through this project. The six Commissioning Principles outlined in the SSC Project in 2020 align with what is expressed within Te Hau Tangata¹² and its focus on primary prevention which will require enabling partnerships between government, communities, Iwi and providers working together and at the local community level directly with children, young people, families and whānau.

33. The SSC Project has 10 key actions for government agencies that encompass a clear and practical approach to funding, for joint funding principles and consistent methodologies to cost services across agencies, to review the pricing of services, to maximise contractual flexibility for partners to meet local needs, and to strengthen local, regional and Māori-Crown partnerships.
34. To meet the vision and strategy envisaged within Te Hau Tangata for sustainable and positive outcomes for children, tamariki and communities, government agencies must work together at a very practical level. The SSC Project work as outlined in 2020 sets a clear, high-level direction for all the activities involved in the commissioning of social services, and SSPA encourages weaving the emerging approaches and developments in this space into the National Strategy and Action Plans/their development. Doing so should help to create a foundation which will be invaluable to ensuring social service providers can do the mahi in their communities that contributes to the primary prevention of family and sexual violence, in the most effective ways possible.

Focus Area 6: Develop ways for government to create changes

35. This is an important focus area for the NGO social service sector working in relation to family and sexual violence. We agree that government funding and commissioning approaches should be flexible and enable shared decision-making. Current commissioning processes do not meet the needs of social service providers and the communities they serve, including children, young people and their families and whānau.
36. There is innovative and transformative work happening within communities by social service providers working alongside families and whānau, and with children and young people who are unable to be with their family or whānau for a time. However, the full effectiveness and potential of NGO social service providers currently continues to be hindered in some respects by long-standing challenges.
37. This includes an estimated (in 2019, through an independent study by MartinJenkins) \$630 million annual funding gap between what government funds NGO social service providers to provide, and the actual costs of delivery.¹³ Although there have been some positive changes to funding levels and contracting approaches since 2019 for child and family social service providers, these have not been systematised and the significant funding gap still exists.

¹² <http://violencefree.govt.nz/assets/National-strategy/1ed211b2fd/Te-Hau-Tangata.pdf>

¹³ https://sspa.org.nz/images/Social_Service_System_-_The_Funding_Gap_and_How_to_Bridge_It_-_FULL_REPORT_FINAL.pdf

38. It is positive that organisations that focus more 'purely' on family and/or sexual violence prevention and/or response have received significant investment in successive Wellbeing Budgets over the past few years.
39. However, it is important to recognise that many NGO social service providers that work directly with children, young people, families and whānau who have experienced, are experiencing or are at risk of family and/or sexual violence have not received any significant increases to their government funding for successive years. This is resulting in urgent workforce issues, among other challenges for NGO social service providers that work with children, young people, families and whānau who have experienced or are at risk of family and/or sexual violence.
40. SSPA urges that the National Strategy and Action Plans focusing on eliminating family and sexual violence recognise this reality. They should acknowledge that the work of primary prevention, as a significant focus of a National Strategy to eliminate family and sexual violence, needs to be adequately and effectively funded by government. This funding needs to flow to those NGO and Iwi social services that work in this space every day, even though it might not be their primary focus.
41. It follows then, that the National Strategy should appropriately recognise the essential role that NGO social service providers working more widely with children, young people, families and whānau play an important role in eliminating family and sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand. They are essential contributors in the ecosystem of family and sexual violence elimination, alongside and complementary to the more traditionally framed family and sexual violence prevention and response sector.
42. This and other associated issues can also be addressed by having a non-competitive funding model which allows for a more coordinated, holistic and collaborative approach for services which is community/people/child/rangatahi needs led. This would reduce the impact of artificial, Budget Vote appropriation-driven silos.
43. Again, we remain hopeful that the SSC Project and its eventual outcomes will help to address some of these issues, which play into the implementation and effectiveness of any National Strategy and Action Plans to Eliminate Family and Sexual Violence.
44. In the meantime, we urge that the National Strategy and Action Plans seek to address funding silos, to better enable NGO and Iwi social services that are working on preventing and responding to family and sexual violence every day. In particular, we encourage a focus in the areas of preventative and response mahi with and for children, rangatahi, families and whānau.