The Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention
Responding, healing, strengthening

Multi-agency responses:

OUTCOMES EVALUATION

The Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention commissioned Ihi Research and Wellbeing Economics NZ to independently evaluate four local multi-agency responses to family violence.

The evaluation looked at what worked in local responses, what drove valued outcomes for victim-survivors, including tamariki and rangatahi (children and young people), and people who use violence. The evaluation also looked at what costs, benefits and unintended impacts were emerging over time.

The evaluation highlights that multi-agency responses to family violence are delivering value for investment and can lead to valued outcomes for people affected by violence, such as increased feelings of safety and protection, reduced administrative burden, and increased engagement.

There were some issues impacting front line delivery, particularly for smaller sites. Limited resourcing can constrain quality assurance, feedback loops and data tracking even when practice is strong, while larger models have more operational capacity to monitor delivery and follow-through at scale.

Additionally, not all agencies and services are consistently using the shared data infrastructure such as the Family Safety System even where it is available, and some continue to rely on paper-based or standalone systems. As a result, feedback loops are not always closed which means multi-agency workers do not know if support has been provided, information is fragmented, and there is no consistent reporting of outcomes for whānau, tamariki and people who use violence.

Sixty people were interviewed including victim-survivors, whānau members and tamariki impacted by family violence, people who use violence, workers and stakeholders involved in delivering local responses.

Four different case studies were developed from:

1. Wairoa: Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke
2. Tairāwhiti: Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke/ Taiora iwi-led hub
3. Rotorua: Super Advocate hub
4. Canterbury: Integrated Safety Response

Social return on investment

For $1 invested, $4.07 of social value was returned

The economic analysis shows that **for every dollar put into multi-agency responses to family violence, more than four dollars of social value is gained**.

We measured social value by the reduction in the severity of family violence, improvements in safety and wellbeing, and substantial lifetime benefits for children exposed to family violence.

The report confirms that investment in well-designed multi-agency responses delivers value to the public and meaningful outcomes to people affected by violence.

We also found that **the value of multi-agency responses lies not only in immediate safety gains, but in shifting trajectories over time, by reducing the longer-term costs of ongoing violence, trauma, displacement, and intergenerational harm.** Effective investment would support the enabling conditions that make integrated responses impactful: workforce capability, coordination, information-sharing, and monitoring and evaluation.

Core components of the models

Across all four local models, the evaluation identified a common set of operational elements needed to run an effective multi-agency response to family violence. These core components align with the multi-agency response operating model that the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention developed in 2025.

1. **Effective leadership**
   - Strategic and distributed leadership
   - Accountability mechanisms supported by data systems and data management
2. **Collaborative ways of working**
   - A multi-agency coordination mechanism e.g., tables, hubs, assigning of tasks
   - Funding or resourcing to enable collaboration
3. **Safe and effective response to risk and need**
   - A clear shared risk assessment process
   - A safety or wellbeing plan
   - Practical support, including flexible funding, to remove barriers to safety and wellbeing
4. **Child and survivor centred responses**
   - A single trusted key worker that sits alongside whānau
   - Kaupapa Māori, whānau-centred, family violence informed practice
5. **Innovation and continuous improvement**
   - Quality assurance and development of practice capability
   - Evidence-based test and learn cycles
6. **Flexible, targeted and integrated investment**
   - Funding/investment settings that enable targeted responses and integration across services, including the ability to procure or prioritise supports when needed.

All the elements matter.

The outcomes described in the case studies do not arise from a single intervention. They are produced through a coordinated system that builds a shared picture of whānau context, responds quickly after an incident, reduces barriers to safety, and stays alongside whānau long enough to support sustained outcomes.

> Accountability for attendance and follow-through should sit in agencies' own performance frameworks, not rest solely on local relationships.
> ***-Outcomes Evaluation report***

> I was seeking help … I called for help and [Whāngaia] came on board … they explained to me who they were when they came to the house…. [They said] 'We can take him to get help. We can take him to get assessed by mental health.' They were offering stuff to do, and I was like, 'What a relief.'
> ***- Victim-survivor, Case Studies report***

Valued Outcomes

All four multi-agency responses delivered valued outcomes for whānau, government agencies and local providers.

Attribution of outcomes across the four models is complex, as whānau primarily and appropriately credit change to frontline kaimahi who walk alongside them, while the system-level functions that enable this support are largely invisible.

The evaluation found:

- Rapid, structured multi-agency triage and safety planning are closely associated with immediate safety gains
- Having a single trusted key worker is strongly linked to improved engagement, trust, stability and follow-through. e.g., Kaiārahi, Super Advocate, Navigator, Kaiāwhina or Family Harm Practitioner

Victim-survivors of family violence

Reported valued outcomes from multi-agency responses include rapid safety gains, reduced administrative burden, feeling believed and supported, growing confidence and emotional regulation over time, and improved day-to-day stability that helps sustain safety and supports healing.

Tamariki and rangatahi impacted by family violence

Reported valued outcomes from multi-agency responses include improved safety and protection, greater routine and calm at home, better connection to health and therapeutic supports (where available), and stronger caregiver capability.

People who use violence

Reported early but valued signs of change in outcomes because of multi-agency responses, including engagement in kaupapa Māori men's programmes, Alcohol and Other Drugs treatment, parenting supports and wānanga. Sustained engagement by providers led to greater accountability and insight, reduced risk factors (e.g., substance use and emotional dysregulation), and safer co-parenting or contact arrangements where appropriate.

Partner agencies and stakeholders

Reported valued outcomes include having a clearer, timely picture of risk and need through shared triage and planning, better coordination of scarce resources, stronger interagency trust and problem-solving, increased kaupapa Māori provider autonomy and capability where Māori-led design is supported, and ongoing learning through shared reflection and local adaptation.

Recommendations

Drawing on the findings across the four models, the following recommendations identify key system-level actions that would strengthen the delivery of multi-agency responses, improve outcomes for whānau, and continue to lift the value of public investment.

- Establish consistent tamariki/rangatahi pathways in every site, with dedicated child/youth roles and age-appropriate mental health and trauma supports.
- Include integrated mental health, alcohol and other drugs, and trauma services as essential multi-agency response planning infrastructure, including accessible recovery pathways and aftercare.
- Strengthen pathways for people who use violence - especially men and rangatahi - including culturally-located options and voluntary supports beyond court-mandated programmes.
- Mandate and resource reliable agency participation in multi-agency responses, with clear expectations, attendance, and follow-through.
- Improve lawful, action-focused information-sharing, using need-to-know principles and clear, safety-focused action summaries.
- Align wider system settings to support safety and recovery by reducing barriers in income support, housing, legal aid and Corrections.
- Implement a shared outcomes and learning framework to improve data feedback, use data/evaluation to evidence impact, drive improvement and strengthen the public investment case for multi-agency responses.
- Secure multi-year funding for core multi-agency response roles (whānau-facing practitioners/advocates, practice leadership, administrative or quality assurance roles) to stabilise delivery.

> Whānau typically and appropriately attribute valued outcomes to the frontline kaimahi who walk alongside them, provide practical and emotional support, and are the visible face of the response. However, the underpinning system functions that enable this support, multi-agency triage and risk assessment, information-sharing, prioritisation processes, and agency participation in planning and resourcing, are largely invisible to whānau.
> ***-Outcomes Evaluation report***

> There is an opportunity to strengthen cross-agency participation in those models where engagement is not formally mandated. While these responses are described as multi-agency, not all partners participate consistently, and when they do, their involvement is often driven by statutory responsibilities related to legislation, care and protection, justice or corrections (system), rather than by a proactive intent to reduce barriers or support whānau to navigate these systems. In the ISR (Integrated Safety Response), where participation is an explicit requirement, agencies respond and contribute more reliably because this is a core expectation of the model. In other sites, participation is more variable and depends heavily on local relationships and individual leadership rather than on clear system mechanisms. This leaves the models vulnerable to staff turnover and leadership changes. Developing stronger agreements, expectations and accountability for agency participation in these local responses offers a significant opportunity to stabilise the models and ensure that whānau consistently benefit from the full range of system supports.
> ***-Outcomes Evaluation report***