



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

Multi-Agency Responses: Social Return on Investment

For the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention

DECEMBER 2025



This evaluation is delivered as a linked set of three reports.

This SROI report provides an analysis of the social value attributed to the outcomes of one case site, giving an indication of the economic contribution that multi-agency responses (MAR) can make in New Zealand.

The Outcomes Evaluation is the main synthesis report, bringing together evidence across the sites to present the overall findings and conclusions.

The Case Studies Report provides the detailed site- and whānau-level narratives that evidence and illustrate the outcomes and pathways summarised in the overarching report.

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We would like to thank Andrew Hume from Curve Technology for analysis of Police data.



Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this report.

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We also acknowledge the wider community efforts within each rohe, whose collective commitment to safety, wellbeing, and transformation continues to shape innovative, place-based responses. This report reflects not only the challenges faced, but also the strength, resilience, leadership, and opportunities that exist within each community.

E mihi ana mātou ki ngā tāngata, ngā rōpū, me ngā whakahaere i whai wāhi mai ki tēnei rangahau. Nā koutou te mātauranga, te manawa nui, me te wairua manaaki i taea ai tēnei mahi te whakatinana. Ka nui te whakarangatira ki ngā kaiārahi, ngā kaimahi, me ngā whakahaere puta noa i ngā wāhi e whā—Ōtautahi, Tūranga-nui-a-Kiwa, Wairoa, me Rotorua—i tautoko i tēnei kaupapa rangahau e aro ana ki ngā otinga ā-rohe mō te whakatika i te kino ki te whānau.

Ka tuku mihi aroha tonu ki ngā whānau i tū kaha mai ki te whakapuaki i ō rātou kōrero me ō rātou wheako. Ko ō koutou reo te pūtake o tēnei pūrongo, ā, ka whakahonoretia te whakawhirinaki i tukuna mai ki a mātou kia kawē tika, kia kawē pono i ā koutou pūrākau.

E mōhio ana mātou ko te kaha o ngā hapori te pou e tū ai ngā otinga taumau.
E whakaatu ana tēnei pūrongo i ngā wero e tū mai ana, otirā ko te kaha,
te manawaroa, te rangatiratanga, me ngā ara whai hua e tipu
ana i roto i ia hapori.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.

Introduction

This report presents an analysis of the social return on investment (SROI) for a Multi-Agency Response model to prevent family violence. This report is part of a wider outcome evaluation conducted with Ihi Research. This return on investment focuses on the Canterbury Integrated Safety Response (ISR) programme that provided the most comprehensive quantitative data.

While the outcomes evaluation reports on four site models, Canterbury, Rotorua, Wairoa and Tairāwhiti, only the Canterbury ISR had sufficiently complete and consistent quantitative outcome data to support an SROI analysis that meets robustness expectations (i.e., measurable change over time, defensible assumptions, and the ability to test and sensitivity-check value estimates). In Rotorua, Tairāwhiti and Wairoa, monitoring systems primarily record outputs (referrals, engagement and service activity) rather than outcomes (see Case Studies report). Outcome evidence for these sites is therefore largely qualitative drawn from whānau and stakeholder interviews and used to identify plausible pathways and mechanisms of change. Because these sites do not yet collect comparable quantitative outcome measures at the whānau level, it was not possible to quantify outcomes, assign credible financial proxies, and apply consistent attribution and deadweight adjustments to a standard suitable for SROI. Including data from these sites would have risked overstating impact and weakening the integrity of the findings.

The first section sets out twelve steps required to complete an SROI analysis.

The second section explains the evidence used to populate the SROI model of social impact.

The third section presents the analysis, which estimates that for every \$1 invested in the ISR programme, the total social benefits are conservatively valued at \$4.07. A sensitivity analysis of assumptions and possibly omitted benefits indicates the return lies between \$3.25 and \$6.37.

The final section considers whether there is any evidence that the social return on investment in the other three programmes is likely to be materially different from the value calculated for the ISR programme. It explains four insights underpinning the SROI result and finds no evidence that the ISR programme is not representative of the social rate of return generated in place-based collaborations to reduce the severity of family violence in their communities.

1. Steps in the analysis

Appendix 1 describes previous SROI studies of family violence reduction programmes, drawing on examples from New Zealand and the United Kingdom. These illustrate the structure of an SROI analysis, which follows a carefully designed sequence of steps. This section explains those steps.

Step 1: Identify evidence on the number of people directly benefiting	The first step is to determine the number of people who are directly benefiting from the programme. This is typically the number of participants in the programme over a given time, often a period of twelve months.
Step 2: Identify different categories of people directly benefiting	There can be different patterns of experience by different types of participants in a programme. The SROI analysis of the Right There programmes in the United Kingdom, for example, identified six archetypes of people using the organisation's services (see Appendix 2). In the New Zealand context, participants can be identified as persons at risk (most likely to be harmed) and persons posing risk (the most likely to cause harm). For some programmes, data distinguishes between adults and children.
Step 3: Identify evidence on the direct benefits	For each category of participant, the analysis must present credible evidence on the benefits they directly receive from their activities in the programme. These benefits might come from objective changes such as a reduction in the statistical likelihood of physical assault ('being safe') or from subjective changes such as lower levels of anxiety because of reduced fear ('feeling safe').
Step 4: Identify evidence on indirect benefits	The direct benefits identified in Step 3 may result in further indirect benefits, such as reduced rates of hospitalisation, fewer interventions by the Police or social services, lower numbers of people before the Courts, and shorter sentences involving imprisonment. These benefits are examples of avoided costs resulting from a programme.
Step 5: Identify evidence on deadweight, attribution and displacement adjustments	The analysis must be careful to identify deadweight benefits (which would have occurred without the programme's services), attribution (allowing for contributions of services outside the programme) and displacement (where benefits produced by the programme resulted in an equivalent worsening of outcomes for people not in the programme). These three possibilities reduce the benefits that can be attributed to the programme. At the very least, the analysis must make reasoned assumptions about what proportion of a programme's direct and indirect benefits might be accounted for by these three possibilities.

<p>Step 6: Identify evidence on how long the direct and indirect benefits endure</p>	<p>The benefits produced by a programme might result from services provided within the year of analysis but might last for longer than the year. This would occur if the shorter prison sentence would have otherwise been for more than twelve months, for example, or if the subjective wellbeing from feeling safer endured beyond the end of the twelve-month period.</p>
<p>Step 7: Identify evidence on an appropriate discount rate for future benefits</p>	<p>If there are benefits beyond the twelve-month period, the analysis must calculate a present value of those benefits using an appropriate discount rate. Guidelines on this question are provided by the Treasury.</p>
<p>Step 8: Identify evidence on the economic value of the direct and indirect benefits</p>	<p>For each direct and indirect benefit identified in the previous steps, the analysis must present credible evidence on the economic value of those benefits. This can be straightforward, such as the avoided costs from reduced use of public services, or complex, such as estimating the willingness to pay of people to increase their levels of being safe or feeling safe.</p>
<p>Step 9: Identify evidence on the economic costs of the programme</p>	<p>The analysis must present a credible estimate of the total cost of providing the services in the programme being evaluated. This must include an allowance for the deadweight loss associated with taxation to finance any public expenditure on the services.</p>
<p>Step 10: Calculate the Social Return on Investment</p>	<p>If Steps 1 to 8 are performed well, it is a simple matter to calculate the social return on investment of the programme. This is typically expressed as the total economic value of direct and indirect benefits per dollar of expenditure on providing the programme's services.</p>
<p>Step 11: Perform a sensitivity analysis of the assumptions in the calculation</p>	<p>The SROI analysis typically involves some assumptions for key components, such as the size of the combined deadweight, attribution and displacement adjustments or the discount rate used to calculate present values. It is best practice to analyse how sensitive the calculated SROI figure is to different assumptions about those components.</p>
<p>Step 12: Communicate the results of the analysis tailored for different audiences</p>	<p>The final step is to communicate the results of the analysis. This may need to reflect different audiences for the information, such as programme funders, providers, and participants.</p>

2. Evidence for the Canterbury ISR programme

The evidence to populate each step in the SROI analysis of the Canterbury ISR programme rely on data collected by New Zealand Police, supplemented by previous studies in New Zealand and the United Kingdom (see Appendix 2).¹ New Zealand Police allowed the research team to access anonymised data that contained three major groups of information for the twelve-month period, 1 July 2024 to 31 June 2025:

- Evaluations using a seven-point scale by the person at risk on questions such as their level of fear for their own safety or the safety of children in the household.
- Evaluations using a seven-point scale by the person posing risk on questions such as awareness of effects of family violence.
- External evaluations using a five-point scale by the Police assessing the severity of harm occurring under the following separate headings: sexual harm, physical harm, verbal harm, psychological harm, and harm to children witnessing or exposed to family harm.

These evaluations were recorded at the beginning of the person's participation in the programme and after twelve weeks. Comparisons between the scores at these different times are the basis for the measurement of direct benefits achieved in the programme.

PEOPLE BENEFITING DIRECTLY FROM THE ISR PROGRAMME

The Police data supplied for this evaluation contains information on 1,803 persons at risk who participated in the ISR programme between 1 July 2024 and 31 June 2025. Of these, 102 entered the programme more than once during the twelve months. In order not to overstate the benefits, the data for each of these persons was synthesised into a single participation, with their pre-scores being the score recorded when they first entered the programme (which could be zero for some criteria) and their post-score being the score recorded when they last left the programme.

The data identified 913 of the 1,803 persons who gave an evaluation on children witnessing or being exposed to family violence. The data did not record how many children were involved. The 2023 Census suggests that the average number of dependent children in a family that has children is 1.4. On this basis, the number of children potentially witnessing or being exposed to family violence is assumed to be 1,278.

The evaluation data completed by persons posing risk did not include information that could be measured for benefits or costs. Consequently, that part of the data set did not provide any input into the calculation of the social return on investment for the programme.

In summary, the analysis identified two categories of people directly benefiting from the ISR programme: the persons at risk; and children witnessing or being exposed to family violence. The analysis focused on the immediate direct benefits of the programme to the adults and on the lifetime benefits to children protected from witnessing or being exposed to family violence.

¹ The authors thank Ilene Te Whetu (ISR Operations Analyst - Canterbury District, New Zealand Police) for timely and helpful advice on how to interpret ISR data.

EVIDENCE ON THE DIRECT BENEFITS

The evidence for direct benefits comes from the data collected by the Police in the ISR programme. When a person at risk enters the programme, the Police record an assessment of the severity of family harm using a five-point scale:

- Extreme
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Absent

In this analysis, the research team have called this the pre-score. After 12 weeks, the assessment is repeated to produce the post-score. If the post-score is lower in the scale than the pre-score, this represents a benefit to the person at risk. This was not always the case; for some participants the score did not change and for a small number (typically involving multiple entries into the programme) the post-score gives a higher level of severity than the pre-score. Nevertheless, the data indicate that the ISR programme has a strong impact on reducing severity.

The assessments are made for five separate examples of family harm: sexual, physical, psychological, verbal, and children witnessing or being exposed to family harm. Figures 1 to 5 below present the distribution of pre-scores and post-scores for each of these in turn. In all cases there is a strong increase in the number of *Absent* grades in the post-scores compared to the pre-scores.

The vertical axis for each graph is the number of adult participants in each score. These sum to 1,803 for the first four graphs. Figure 5 is restricted to adult participants with children, which sums to 913.

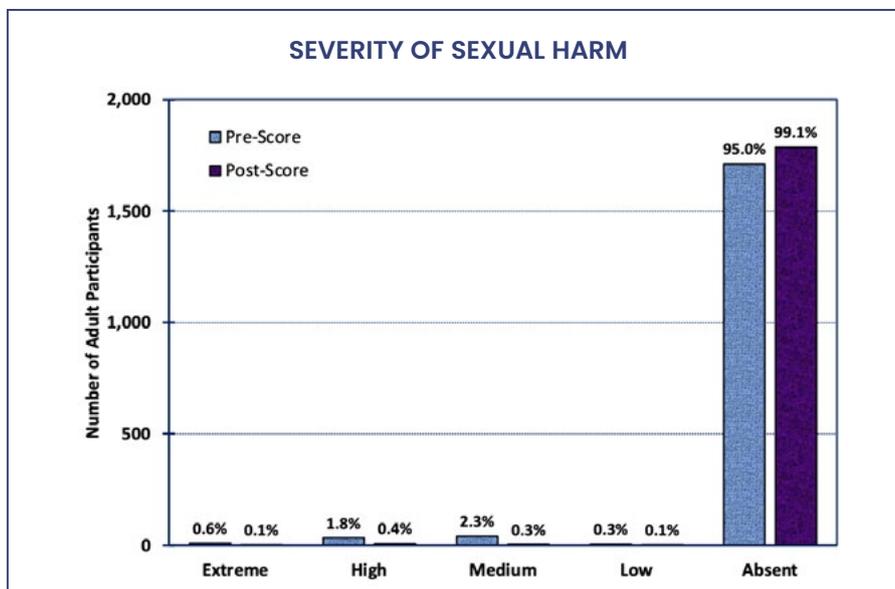


Figure 1: Distribution of pre-scores and post-score for severity of sexual harm (Source: Authors using data provided by New Zealand Police).

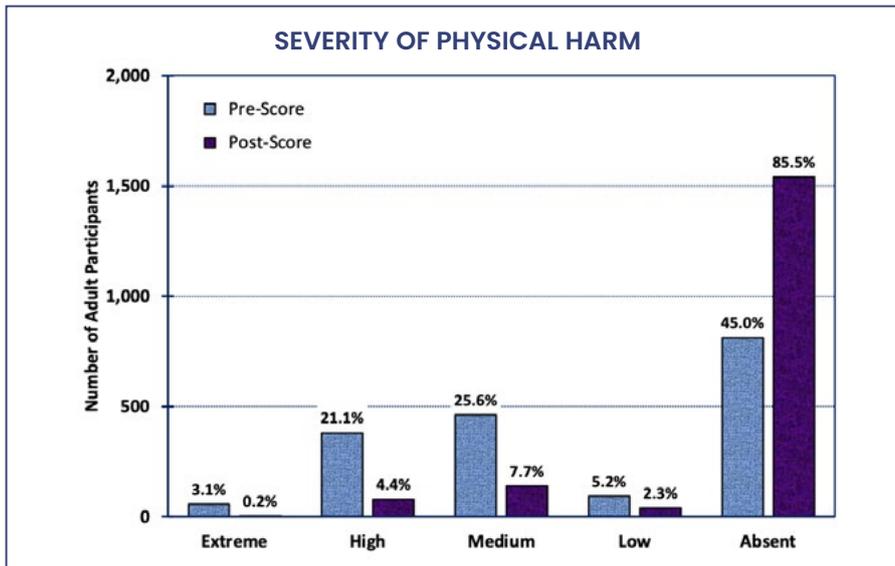


Figure 2: Distribution of pre-scores and post-score for severity of physical harm (Source: Authors using data provided by New Zealand Police).

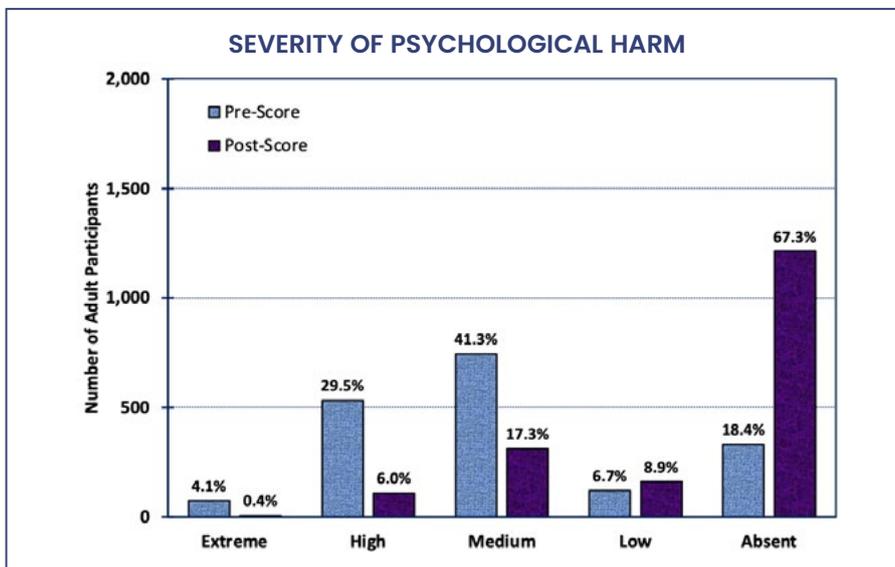


Figure 3: Distribution of pre-scores and post-score for severity of psychological harm (Source: Authors using data provided by New Zealand Police).

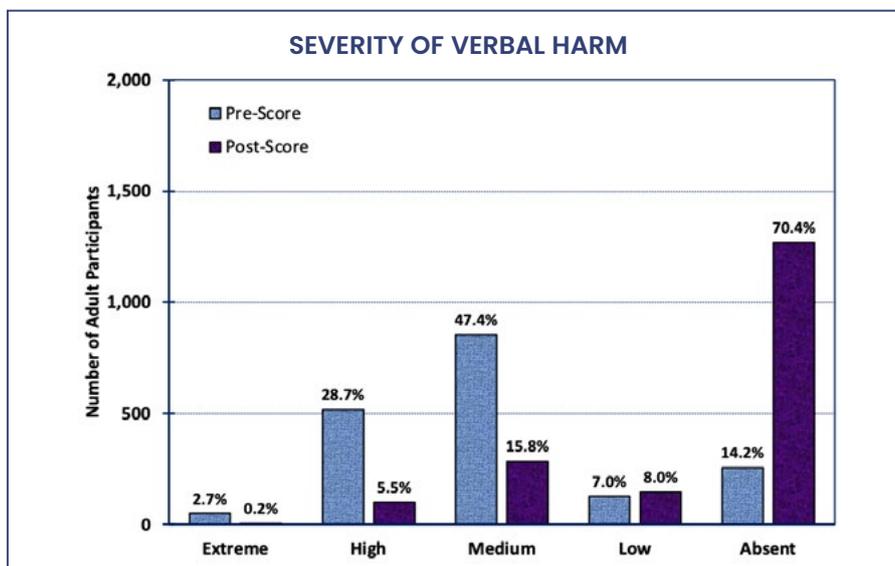


Figure 4: Distribution of pre-scores and post-score for severity of verbal harm (Source: Authors using data provided by New Zealand Police).

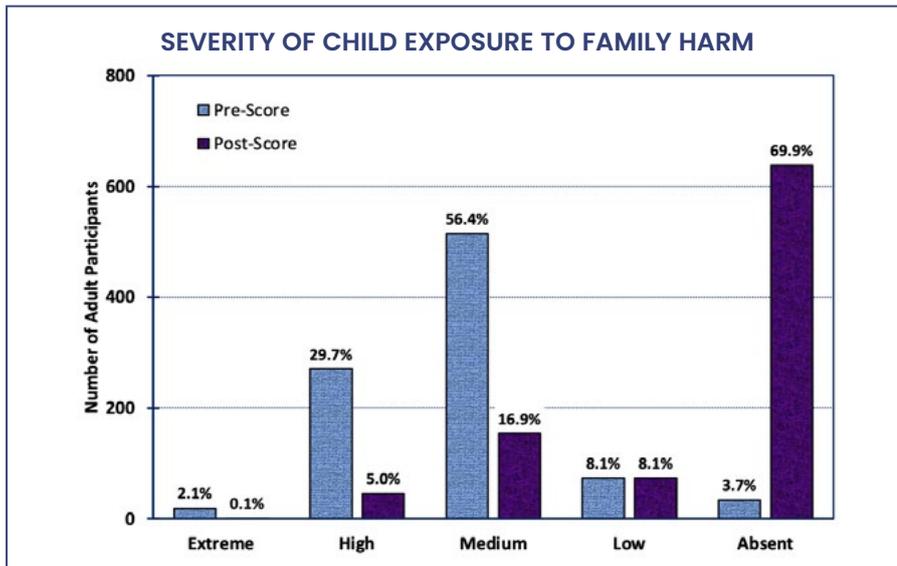


Figure 5: Distribution of pre-scores and post-score for severity of child exposure to family harm (Source: Authors using data provided by New Zealand Police).

The data for sexual, physical and psychological harm (Figures 1 to 2) are used to calculate the benefits to adults in the Canterbury ISR programme, with one addition to be discussed shortly. The analysis does not include the data on psychological harm (Figure 3) or verbal harm (Figure 4). The figures show that substantial improvements were achieved in these two domains, but the research team was unable to identify any source for putting an economic value on this and so decided to focus on the other two items for this study.

The New Zealand Police data also includes information provided by the adult participant in the programme on feeling safe using a seven-point scale where 1 is the lowest value for feeling safe and 7 is the highest value. Again, this evaluation is recorded twice in the programme to allow a comparison before and after the programme. The literature recognises a distinction between 'being safe' and 'feeling safe'; so, this is an important source of potential benefits to the participants in the ISR programme.

Figure 6 shows that participants move towards higher levels of feeling safe during their participation. The percentage of people reporting in the top two levels increases from 25 per cent to 71 per cent.

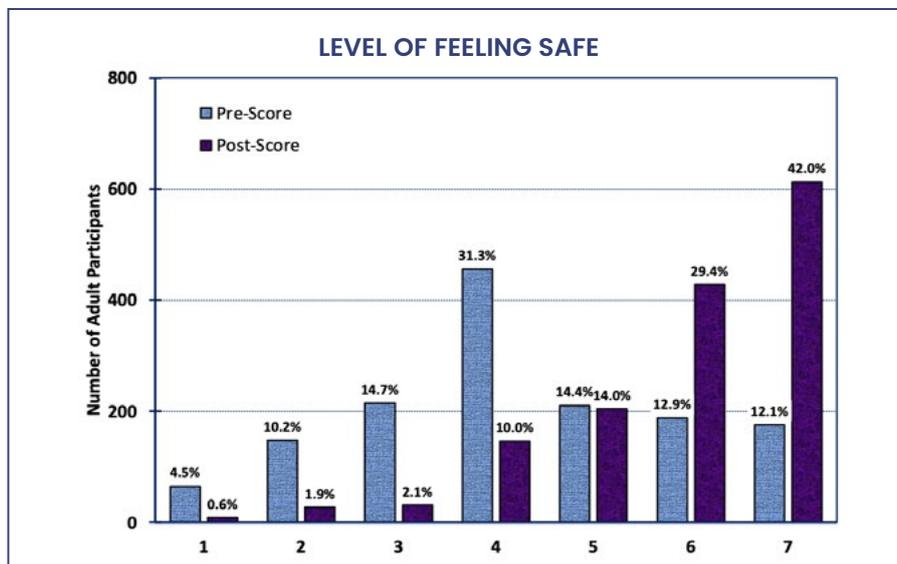


Figure 6: Distribution of pre-scores and post-score for evaluation of feeling safe (Source: Authors using data provided by New Zealand Police).

Taken together, Figures 1 to 6 illustrate why a successful programme to reduce family violence can be very beneficial (see the summary of previous studies in Appendix 1). Family harm covers several dimensions and can have lifetime impacts on children who witness or are exposed to family violence. This section has presented evidence that the Canterbury ISR programme has a measurable impact on reducing harm across these dimensions.

EVIDENCE ON INDIRECT BENEFITS

Family harm imposes costs outside the family. To illustrate, the Treasury's CBAX tool for cost benefit analysis provides an estimate of the total cost of violent offences, which in 2026 values is \$29,649 per incident.² This figure is based on a study nearly twenty years old by Roper and Thompson (2006), which itself drew heavily on overseas estimates. Table 1 shows the distribution of costs associated with violent offences.

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
Direct loss of quality of life for person assaulted	58.3%
Lost output due to time away from paid employment	18.2%
Other private sector costs	0.1%
Health sector costs	12.9%
Justice sector costs	10.4%
Other public sector costs	0.1%
TOTAL	100.0%

Table 1: *Discount Rates Recommended by Treasury (Source: Roper and Thompson, 2006).*

The direct costs to the person assaulted (loss of quality of life) made up 58.3 per cent of the total costs. Note that this does not include costs to children who witness or are exposed to family harm, which was not included in the 2006 study. Time off work accounted benefits accounted for another 18.2 per cent. In the public sector, the costs to Health were 12.9 per cent and to Justice were 10.4 per cent. Thus, the three major indirect benefits of a successful programme to reduce the severity of family violence are reductions in output costs, health costs and justice costs.

EVIDENCE ON DEADWEIGHT, ATTRIBUTION AND DISPLACEMENT ADJUSTMENTS

The recent BERL report analysing the Whiria Te Muka programme devoted a chapter to explaining its derivation of attribution, deadweight and displacement estimates. That programme is similar in aims to the Canterbury ISR programme and so the researchers for this evaluation have used the BERL central estimates as shown in Table 2.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	BERL ESTIMATE
Deadweight	What per cent would not have happened anyway?	52%
Attribution	What per cent was not due to other contributors?	44%
Displacement	What per cent did not displace other beneficial activities?	56%
TOTAL	Share assigned to the ISR programme (rounded down)	12.5%

Table 2: *Estimates of Deadweight, Attribution and Displacement factors (Source: BERL, 2025, p. 56).*

² Available at <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/public-sector-leadership/investment-management/investment-planning/treasurys-cbax-tool>.

The estimates in Table 2 imply that the contribution of the programme to the total direct and indirect benefits is 12.8 per cent (0.52 x 0.44 x 0.56). The figures are all estimates and so the research team rounded this value down to 12.5 percent, which implies \$1 for every \$8 of benefit created.

EVIDENCE ON HOW LONG THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT BENEFITS ENDURE

It is possible that a successful intervention through the Canterbury ISR programme can have enduring impacts on reducing long-term risks of further family violence. An earlier study of the programme, for example, assumed that the programme’s beneficial impact on reducing reoffending rates would continue for five years, while acknowledging the lack of evidence on this estimate (Mossman, Wehipeihana and Bealing, 2019, p. 71). That assumption of benefits enduring for five years is consistent with a study of a programme in Australia that offers support to women and children at risk of family violence and/or homelessness (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019).

As is explained below, this study’s method takes an alternative approach for valuing benefits for the adults who participate in the programme. In the absence of the programme, the study assumes that the pattern of family violence incidents might continue until it became a crime. Laying criminal charges is itself a major (and expensive) intervention, which means the previous situation before the crime is unlikely to continue unchanged. Hence the study focuses on the benefits to adults of avoiding the costs of a family violence crime.

The study also includes benefits for children witnessing or exposed to family violence. This experience in childhood can impose life-long costs and so the study includes a present value estimate of those costs. The figure is taken from an international study, which used a discount rate of 3.5 per cent (which is more conservative than recommended in New Zealand for non-commercial programmes).

STEP 7: IDENTIFY EVIDENCE ON AN APPROPRIATE DISCOUNT RATE FOR FUTURE BENEFITS

As explained in the previous subsection, this study was not required to use a discount rate for its SROI analysis. For completeness, the authors note that the Treasury provides clear guidelines on suitable discount rates for this type of analysis when required. It depends on whether the analysis is for a commercial programme or a social programme and (if the latter) on how many years the benefits occur into the future. The recommended discount rates are presented in Table 3 below.

PUBLIC SECTOR DISCOUNT RATES (REAL)	YEAR 1-30	YEAR 31-100	YEAR 101+	SENSITIVITY TEST (MANDATORY)
Non-commercial programmes	2.0%	1.5%	1.0%	8%
Commercial programmes	8%	8%	8%	2%

Table 3: Discount Rates Recommended by Treasury (Source: Treasury, 2025, p. 15).

EVIDENCE ON THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE BENEFITS

The research team were able to estimate the economic value of the direct and indirect benefits of the following measured impacts of the ISR programme:

- Reduction in severity of sexual harm (shown in Figure 1 above)
- Reduction in severity of physical harm (shown in Figure 2 above).
- Increase in feeling safe by the adult at risk (shown in Figure 6 above).

The research team also analysed the lifetime impact on children witnessing or exposed to family harm, which meant we able to estimate an economic value for the following measured impact.

- Reduction in severity of children witnessing or exposed to family harm (shown in Figure 5 above).

The data for the first three items are taken from a Home Office study in the United Kingdom using data for domestic abuse in England and Wales in 2016/17 (Oliver et al., 2019). That study includes estimates for the physical and emotional costs (which this study calls direct harm to adults), lost output costs, and health services costs, presented per person subjected to domestic violence. The key estimates, measured in British pounds valued at 2016/17 prices, are presented in Table 4.

TYPE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE	DIRECT HARM TO ADULTS	LOST OUTPUT	HEALTH SERVICES	TOTAL COSTS (PER PERSON)
Rape	£58,860	£17,130	£1,310	£77,300
Violence with injury	£54,240	£16,150	£3,170	£73,560
Violence without injury	£22,630	£6,760	£630	£30,020
Stalking	£21,920	£6,560	£1,210	£29,680
Sexual touching	£9,950	£3,340	£270	£13,570

Table 4: Estimated unit costs of domestic abuse in England and Wales by type of domestic abuse, 2016/17 (Source: Oliver et al., 2019, p. 54).

An important advantage of this data source is that the unit measurement is not per incident but is per adult (aged 16–59 years) who experienced domestic abuse during the twelve months to 31 March 2017. Thus, the figures can be applied to the data in Figures 1, 2 and 6 by making some reasoned assumptions about how the scales in the New Zealand Police data align with the items in the Home Office study. This was done as shown in Table 5. Values for the intervening items on the New Zealand Police Scale were calculated by simple interpolation.

NEW ZEALAND POLICE SCALE	HOME OFFICE SCALE	TOTAL COSTS (PER PERSON)
Extreme sexual harm	Rape	£77,300
Medium sexual harm	Sexual touching	£13,570
Absent sexual harm	No harm	£0
Extreme physical harm	Violence with injury	£73,560
Medium physical harm	Violence without injury	£30,020
Absent physical harm	No harm	£0
Feeling Safe = 1	Stalking	£29,680
Feeling Safe = 7	No harm	£0

Table 5: Alignment of the New Zealand Police Scales with the Home Office Scales by the authors.

The estimation of economic costs for children witnessing or exposed to family violence came from another United Kingdom study reported in Herbert et al. (2025). This reported that the lifetime costs for non-fatal childhood exposure to child maltreatment and/or parental domestic violence and abuse are £71,309 per child, measured at 2019 prices. To maintain the study's conservative approach to valuation, the research team assigned this value to the New Zealand Police Scale of Extreme severity of exposure, and assigned values of three-quarters, half and one-quarter to High, Medium and Low.

EVIDENCE ON THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF THE PROGRAMME

The Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention is a joint venture that champions and strengthens the collective approach of government, tangata whenua, communities and whānau to enable wellbeing and a life free from family violence and sexual violence.³ The Centre was able to provide us with an aggregated cost of family violence integrated safety response services, including family violence response coordination, for Canterbury.

This cost was \$5,647,641.

The taxes needed to fund a public programme mean taxpayers do not have that money to spend themselves. There are, however, other costs involved in raising taxes. There are the costs of collecting taxes and imposing those taxes will lead to changes in behaviour by taxpayers. As tax rates on income rise, for example, some people will reduce their hours of paid employment. Economists call these costs the deadweight loss of taxation, which should be incorporated into the calculation of the social return on investment in tax-funded programmes. The Treasury recommends that these deadweight costs should be valued at 20 per cent of the total taxes used to fund the programme, which is the approach taken in this current analysis (Treasury, 2015, pp. 15-16).

The deadweight cost of taxation to fund the expenditure of \$5,647,641 is therefore \$1,129,528.

³ See <https://preventfvsv.govt.nz/about-us>.

3. The SROI analysis of the Canterbury ISR programme

This section presents the Social Return on Investment Analysis, based on the evidence presented in the previous section.

Values measured in British Pounds were converted to 2023/24 values using the United Kingdom Consumer Price Index and then converted to New Zealand prices using the average exchange rate for the twelve months ending June 2024 (which was £0.4817).

The New Zealand Police data indicated whether children were affected by family harm but did not record how many children. At the 2023 Census, Statistics New Zealand advises that the average number of dependent children in all families with children was 1.4. This figure was used as a proxy for the average number of children in households that had children in the New Zealand Police data.

Table 6 summarises the results from the Social Return on Investment analysis. It finds that for every \$1 invested into the ISR programme (including an allowance for the deadweight loss from taxation) produced a benefit of **\$4.07**.

	NZ\$ (MILLIONS)	NZ\$ (MILLIONS)
Benefits		
Reduction in sexual harm	\$0.8	
Reduction in physical harm	\$10.2	
Increase in feeling safe	\$4.9	
Reduction in Lifetime costs for children	\$11.7	
TOTAL BENEFITS		\$27.6
Costs		
Expenditure on the ISR programme	\$5.7	
Deadweight loss of taxation	\$1.1	
TOTAL COSTS		\$6.8
Total Benefits less Total Costs	\$20.8	
SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT		\$4.07

Table 6: Social Return on Investment of the ISR programme by the authors.

A previous analysis of the ISR pilot in Canterbury reported that the ratio of benefits to costs was between 3.2 and 5.2 depending on whether the programme’s lower recidivism lasted for five or ten years (Mossman, Wehipeihana and Bealing, 2019). Two studies by BERL of the Whiria Te Muka programme reported a social rate of return of \$4.07 for 2019/20 and \$4.56 for the four years 2020-2024 (BERL, 2025). This current study’s estimate of \$4.07 is in this range and by coincidence has matched the BERL estimate for 2019/20.

SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

Although the analysis has produced an estimate in the range of that produced in similar studies, it is important to test whether that figure to assumptions made about the data including assumptions made about potentially excluded benefits.

The New Zealand Police data, for example, included information on changes in severity for sexual, physical, psychological and verbal harm but the analysis included only the first two categories because of difficulties in finding an economic value of the third and fourth categories. To explore the impact of this omission, the researchers repeated the analysis on an assumption that the harm to the person at risk when the severity is assessed as extreme is comparable to the cost of harm resulting from stalking in the Home Office study. The values for high, medium and low were assumed to be three-quarters, half, and one-quarter of this value, mirroring the approach taken for feeling safe.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 show large reductions in the severity of psychological harm and of verbal harm. This analysis found that including the benefits of the programme on reducing psychological harm increased the SROI to \$4.94; and that including the benefits on reducing verbal harm increased the SROI from \$4.07 to \$5.02.

Another conservative element in the baseline analysis is that it did not include any benefits that might continue beyond the current year. To explore the impact of this assumption, the researchers repeated the analysis assuming that the benefits continue for a further year. The future benefits were discounted using the Treasury's recommended rate of 2.0 per cent (Table 3 above).

This analysis found that allowing the benefits to continue for one more year into the future increased the SROI from the baseline \$4.07 to \$6.37.

The baseline analysis did not consider the possibility that the impacts of the programme on reducing physical violence and improving feelings of safety may have saved a life (preventing a homicide or a suicide). The Treasury's CBAX database records that the midpoint value of a statistical life in New Zealand is \$16,615,947 measured in 2026 dollars, which is around \$15 million in 2024 dollars. Taking into account that the ISR programme's additional contribution is assumed to be 12.5 per cent (and that 12.5 per cent of \$15 million is \$1.875 million), it is possible to calculate the additional economic value of the programme if it contributed to saving one adult life.

This analysis found that if the programme contributed to saving one adult life, the SROI would increase from \$4.07 to \$4.34.

As explained above, the assumption that the programme's additional contribution is 12.5 per cent is based on the recent study by BERL. To explore the sensitivity of the estimate to this assumption, the researchers repeated the analysis using an assumption of 10 per cent and of 15 per cent.

The analysis found that using a lower rate of 10 per cent for the additional contribution rate reduced the SROI to \$3.25 and using a higher rate of 15 per cent increased the SROI to \$4.88.

The main source for estimating the economic costs of family violence came from the Home Office study for the United Kingdom. It is possible that the estimates are too high for the New Zealand context. The New Zealand level of GDP per capita, for example, is lower. To explore the consequences of this possibility, the researchers introduced an assumption that the UK estimates needed to be reduced by 20 per cent for New Zealand.

The analysis found that reducing the value of the UK estimates by 20 per cent reduced the SROI to \$3.25. This is the same as the impact of reducing the programme's additional contribution from 12.5% to 10.0% – both changes reduce a factor in the baseline analysis by 20 per cent.

Finally, the baseline analysis used Census data to assume that the number of children in each family with children is 1.4. It is possible that this is a low estimate for this group. The research team therefore repeated the analysis with an assumption that the average number of children in each family with children was 2.

This analysis found assuming the number of children to be 2 rather than 1.4 per family with children increased the SROI to \$4.80.

SOCIAL RATE OF RETURN UNDER DIFFERENT ASSUMPTIONS	RETURN PER \$1 INVESTED
Baseline analysis (from Table 6)	\$4.07
Psychological harm benefits are included in the analysis	\$4.94
Verbal harm benefits are included in the analysis	\$5.02
Benefits are assumed to endure for two years	\$6.37
The programme contributes to one adult life saved	\$4.34
The programme's additional contribution is 10%, not 12.5%	\$3.25
The programme's additional contribution is 15%, not 12.5%	\$4.88
The UK benefits are 20% overvalued for New Zealand	\$3.25
The average number of children per family is 2.0, not 1.4	\$4.80

Table 7: Sensitivity analysis by the authors.

Table 7 presents the eight sensitivity analyses undertaken by the research team. In all cases, the SROI is well above \$1, indicating that a conclusion that the programme is producing value for money is not sensitive to a particular assumption. Indeed, the lowest value in the table is \$3.25. The highest value of \$6.37 comes from assuming the benefits of the programme continue for a second year.

4. Other family violence reduction programmes

The wider outcome evaluation report provides qualitative evidence on four family violence reduction programmes (Leonard et al., 2025). The ISR in Canterbury was able to provide the most comprehensive quantitative data, which has been the focus of the social return on investment analysis in this report. This section considers whether there is any evidence that the social return on investment in the other three programmes is likely to be materially different from the value calculated for the ISR programme.

To address this question, it is important to understand what the SROI analysis is revealing. The headline figure is that the programme is producing a social rate of return well above 1. More importantly, the analysis provides insights on how this positive return is being achieved.

The first insight recognises family harm to adults at risk has multiple dimensions and so the programme measures a range of impacts related to sexual harm, violence harm, psychological harm and verbal harm. These multiple dimensions mean that reducing the severity of family harm has a large impact on people's wellbeing when they are all taken into account.

Second, these benefits extend beyond the direct benefits experienced by the person at risk. This study used UK data that includes estimates of indirect benefits concentrating on lost economic output and increased health costs associated with family harm.

Third, on top of being safe, there are additional benefits when a person feels safe. The data collected by the New Zealand Police in its Client Voice data on feeling safe, for example, show a large impact of the ISR programme on how people at risk felt their safety improve over twelve weeks.

Finally, the analysis recognises the lifelong impacts on children who witness or are exposed to family harm. Figure 5 records the very large impact of the ISR programme on reducing the number of children in that situation.

Each programme is applying those insights in ways that harness place-based collaborations. There may be opportunities for the programmes to learn from each other's experiences, but the research team has not found any evidence that the ISR in Canterbury is not representative of the social rate of return that can be generated in other place-based collaborations to reduce the severity for family harm in their communities.

Indeed, the authors note that BERL has undertaken two social return on investment analyses of the Whiria Te Muka programme; see BERL (2025). Over four financial years from July 2020 to June 2024, the government invested just over \$5 million in operating expenses into that programme, which is comparable to expenditure in the Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke programme in Tairāwhiti. BERL's more recent analysis (using different data sources to this current report) estimated a social return on investment of \$4.56 per \$1 spent, which illustrates that programmes involving fewer participants than ISR can be successful.

The qualitative analysis in outcome evaluation case study report confirms that the four family harm reduction programmes currently recognise the importance of the above insights. Thus, the Case Studies report has been able to describe a whānau outcomes table for each programme and to present attribution tables explaining the programme's contribution to direct benefits for participants. These were illustrated with three or four case studies of whānau engagement in the four programmes.

The cross case study analysis in this outcome evaluation highlights common features in the programmes that serve to reinforce the four insights. Across all sites, for example, the models are deliberately designed as agency/service integrated, multi-level systems that link a family harm incident response to a risk assessment, resulting in short-term safety planning and medium-term wellbeing outcomes for whānau. This integrated approach is being applied at three levels: governance/leadership, systems and practice.

A unique feature of the ISR programme is its practice of collecting data at the beginning of a person's participation and again 12 weeks later. This has been the foundation of the social return of investment in this report. The other three programmes are not currently resourced to collect similarly detailed data, which means it is not possible to repeat this analysis for those three examples. Nevertheless, the case studies have identified possible inhibitors in the programmes outside Canterbury.

- In Wairoa, resource gaps in locally available services to residents are likely to be hindering improvements in whānau outcomes.
- In Tairāwhiti, some public agencies have become less engaged in the programme due to competing demands on time and resources.
- In Rotorua, the programme relies on good will from partners as funding appears to be located outside the delivery model.

These three observations reflect the importance of adequate resources for any programme's success. There are differences in the amount of funding for each programme relative to the scale of local family harm investigations, as shown in Figure 7. The pie charts present data on the share of expenditure devoted to each of the four programmes and on the share of total family harm investigations in each place. The data for Rotorua supports the feedback reported in the case studies that this programme has fewer resources relative to need than the other programmes.

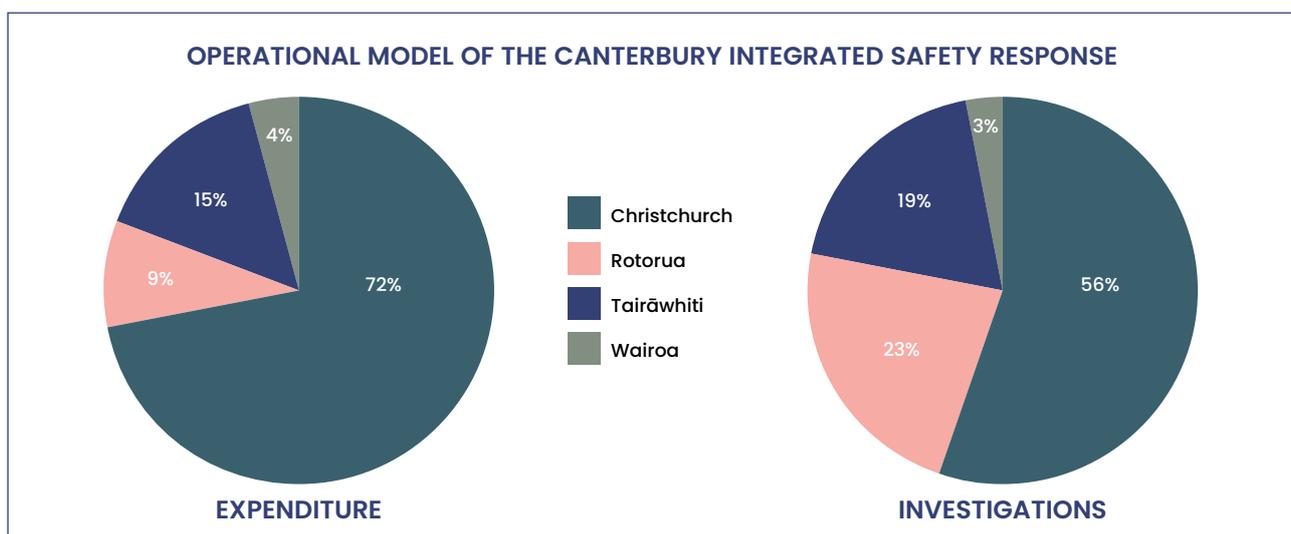


Figure 7: Share of Total Expenditure and Share of Total Family Harm Investigations in the Four Programmes (Source: Authors using data provided by New Zealand Police).

To conclude, the SROI analysis indicates that the resources invested in the Canterbury ISR programme is **creating value of \$4.07 for every \$1.00 of investment**. That conclusion is possible because the ISR programme is funded to collect data that can be used to evaluate impact. Research by BERL (2025) offers evidence that similar rates of return can be generated in other place-based collaborations in New Zealand communities, but a lack of investment to collect comparable data in Rotorua, Tairāwhiti and Wairoa means it is not possible to make similar statements about the other three programmes included in this study.

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APPENDIX 1:

Background Information

This section summarises some relevant studies of family violence programmes, including previous studies of the three programmes analysed in this report, to explain how these studies have measured benefits. This is the foundation of the methods adopted by the research team for this report's social return on investment analysis.

CANTERBURY INTEGRATED SAFETY RESPONSE (ISR)

The New Zealand Police has a webpage dedicated to this programme, accessible at <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/programmes-and-initiatives/integrated-safety-response-isr>. It provides the following overview.

ISR is a multi-agency intervention designed to ensure the immediate safety of victims and children, and to work with perpetrators to prevent further violence.

ISR takes a whole-of-family and whānau approach that puts the risk and needs of family and whānau at the centre. The operational delivery of ISR is hosted by Police as part of the broader Government work on family violence and sexual violence.

Key features of ISR include dedicated staff, funded specialist services for victims and perpetrators, daily risk assessment and triage, family safety plans, an electronic case management system and an intensive case management approach to collectively work with high-risk families.

An ISR graphic at <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/isr-graphic-overview.pdf> (produced in 2016) describes three intended outcomes:

- Reduction in family violence (crime surveys)
- Reduction in serious harm (hospital data, Police serious crime data)
- Reduced reoffending and revictimization (NGO data, Police data, crime surveys)

A PowerPoint file introducing the Canterbury pilot in 2016 identified five benefits (<https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/isr-overview-presentation.pptx>):

- Families receive faster and integrated support and services following a family violence incident.
- Victims are safer and feel supported.
- The needs of victims (to be safe) and perpetrators (to stop harmful behaviour) are considered together in a family-centred response.
- Increased reporting of family violence because victims and those who know about the violence have more confidence in the system.
- Fewer perpetrators re-offend.

There was a detailed evaluation of the ISR programme in 2019, covering the Canterbury and Waikato pilots (Mossman et al., 2019). It included a diagram on page 32 with a version of the ISR model logic, distinguishing three levels of outcomes:

Family and whānau short-term outcomes

- Immediate safety of families and whānau enhanced
- Perpetrators receive more effective response to support behaviour change
- Referred to right service at right time
- Better and quicker access to support services
- Increased rates of engagement
- More integrated and co-ordinated support for families and whānau

Family and whānau intermediate outcomes

- Family and whānau members receive support services they need leading to improved circumstances, knowledge, attitudes and skills
- Reduced frequency and severity of family violence episodes
- Improved family and whānau wellbeing

Long-term family and whānau and society outcomes

- Harm to family and whānau is minimised – more healthy productive lives
- More healthy respectful non-violent family and whānau relationships
- Increased awareness and decreased tolerance of family violence in NZ
- NZers motivated and supported to act on concerns about family violence

This report presents results from a cost-benefit analysis carried out by NZIER. The benefits were based on ISR achieving a lower recidivism rate than the national average; in particular, the analysis identified an 18% reduction in reported family violence among Māori victims of an offence, which was statistically significant (see Wehipeihana, 2019). This benefit was monetarised using estimates reported in the Treasury's CBAX database, with two extensions. The Ministry of Transport's value of a statistical life was used to monetarise the cost of a homicide and the social cost of threats of harm or property damage was taken to be equivalent to the social costs of property damage.

This analysis produced a figure of avoided costs between \$19,784 and \$27,394 per incident. In its most conservative analysis (incidents involving Māori victims, assessed over a five year period), the net present value was calculated to be \$22.68m. The total costs were estimated to be \$10.45m. Hence the benefit-cost ratio was 3.2. This increased to 5.2 if the lower recidivism lasted for ten years instead of five years.

WHĀNGAIA NGĀ PĀ HARAKEKE

Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke (Whāngaia) is an initiative involving place-based partnerships between the New Zealand Police, iwi, whānau, government agencies and non-government organisations, launched first in the Counties Manukau District (April 2016) followed by the Eastern and Northland Districts (June 2017). There have been evaluations of the three pilots (Walton & Brooks, 2019; Love et al., 2019; Schulze et al., 2021) and also of three subsequent pilots in the Auckland and the Southern Police Districts (Walton, 2021; Walton et al., 2022; Leonard & Arahanga, 2023).

The evaluations by Walton and Brooks (2019), Walton (2021) and by Walton and Westerman (2022) were able to use Police data to measure improved outcomes in their respective pilots. The Counties

Manukau evaluation estimated that Whāngaia had reduced harm from offending by 15 per cent. The Southern evaluation estimated that Whāngaia had reduced harm by 19.5 per cent.

The BERL evaluation of Whiria Te Muka in the Northland District analysed the pilot's social return on investment. It focused on the delivery of reduced or prevented whānau harm. Whānau harm was defined as 'a situation where one or more members of a whānau are negatively affected by the actions or decisions of another member of that whānau' (p. 8).

Data collected by the programme included a risk assessment of future whānau harm and the analysis was able to identify that between 2019 and 2020, 896 whānau had moved to a lower rating, providing a measure of avoided harm. The authors used credible data sources to estimate that every incident of whānau harm prevented by Whiria Te Muka created a benefit equivalent to \$61,627 for stakeholders. This yielded a social return of \$4.07 for every \$1 invested in the pilot.

During the research for our own study, Whiria Te Muka released a 2025 update of the BERL study. This showed an increase in returns from the pilot (p. v).

Whiria Te Muka demonstrates value for money, delivering \$4.56 in social returns for every \$1 invested over the past four years (2020–2024). This represents an improvement from the already strong 2021 baseline of \$4.07 per dollar invested.

Over the four financial years from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2024, the government invested just over \$5 million in operating expenses (OPEX). This financial investment into Whiria Te Muka, over this period, has provided a SROI of \$62.76 million to the Far North community.

This study also considers the Whāngaia programme based at Wairoa, which has its own website accessible at <https://whangaia.org.nz/>. It provides the following overview.

THE ROLE OF WHĀNGAIA IS TO HEAR WHĀNAU VOICE.

Involving whānau and communities in sustainable family violence reduction is a leading principle for the outfit. The first point of call after a call-out for family violence, the initiative receives referrals following incidents involving whānau and is designed to implement long-term reductions in family violence and provide navigation support between other services for whānau.

Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke has a whānau-driven approach, and the presence of a community member or iwi with police on-site at call-out can reduce the tension within a crisis. The emphasis is on acknowledging the challenges whānau face when navigating the system and cultivating a tikanga Māori and whakapapa approach to the crisis. It is designed to ensure an individual's story is taken into account when authorities make referrals to agencies, as well as ensuring ongoing support to people.

We encourage whānau to share their story so that we can ensure their voice is heard when we make referrals to local agencies. This could be anything from a phone conversation, to arranging a whānau hui if requested.

ROTORUA FAMILY HARM RESPONSE

New Zealand Police has a family violence response that outlines steps Police take when undertaking a quality family violence investigation.⁵ It maintains a dedicated webpage on its family violence approach that offers resources for community groups.⁶ One of the resources explains a statistical measure created by New Zealand Police to assess risk.⁷ SAFVR (Static Assessment of Family Violence

⁵ <https://policepolicy.nz/policies/family-harm-policy-and-procedures/u-qthee/family-harm-policy-and-procedures-220822.pdf>.

⁶ <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/family-violence/family-harm-approach-resources>.

⁷ <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/family-harm-new-risk-measures-handout-web.pdf>.

Recidivism estimates the likelihood (high, moderate or low) that a person will commit a family violence offence in the next two years given information held by the Police when they attend a family violence incident.

The Rotorua Family Harm Response (FHR) is a practitioner-led, co-located hub in Rotorua that converts Police referrals into rapid safety actions and sustained support co-ordinated by a community specialist or 'super advocate'. Practice is anchored in local kaupapa such as Te Ao-kapurangi. Case studies demonstrate a sequence of short-term (0–3 months), medium-term (3–12 months) and long-term (12+ months) outcomes achieved by the Rotorua FHR. These are:

Short-term outcomes

- Faster, lower-stress access to help; fewer missed connections
- Improved completion of evidence steps (statements/VVS)
- Legal protections in train (PSOs, protection orders)
- Practical barriers removed so safety plans are workable
- Earlier, child-centred engagement (Family Start uptake)

Medium-term outcomes

- Protection orders in place; safer housing or relocation sustained
- Behaviour change signals (use of safety plans; fewer breaches)
- Reduced repeat presentations on daily lists
- Better child safety routines; therapy/activities in place
- Smoother justice progress (charges, bail conditions)

Long-term outcomes

- Sustained safety and wellbeing for whānau
- Stable resettlement (work/school/whānau stability)
- System trust and earlier help-seeking
- Family violence no longer occurring

There has been no previous quantitative evaluation of these benefits.

THE GLENN INQUIRY

The Glenn Inquiry was a private inquiry initiated by Sir Owen Glenn that aimed to propose a better system for tackling child abuse and family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand, completing its work on 28 November 2014.⁸ It commissioned a report by Sherilee Kahui and Suzanne Snively on Measuring the Economic Costs of Child Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence to New Zealand (Kahui & Snively, 2014). The report does not cover all aspects of family violence, but its approach and data have been foundational in subsequent research evaluating programmes that seek to reduce the level of family violence in the country.

⁸ <https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/webarchive/20141210152931/https://glenninquiry.org.nz/>.

The report estimated that depending on how different gaps in data were addressed, the cost of child abuse and intimate partner violence to the New Zealand economy was \$4.1 billion to \$7.0 billion dollars in 2014. Its framework for the study identified six cost drivers listed in Table 8 below. The largest category is Pain, suffering and premature mortality (51 per cent), which was estimated using the concept of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), allowing for depression, anxiety, physical injury and eating disorders as the result of family violence. The report used a Ministry of Transport study to calculate the value of a year of healthy life as \$181,652 in 2014 dollars.

CATEGORY	TOTAL COST (\$M)	SHARE (PER CENT)
Pain, suffering and premature mortality	\$3,600m	51%
Health costs	\$377m	5%
Productivity-related costs	\$954m	14%
Consumption-related costs	\$705.5m	10%
Administrative and other costs	\$836.7m	12%
Transfer costs	\$582.3m	8%

Table 8: *Cost Drivers of Child Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence, New Zealand, 2014*
Source: Kahui and Snively (2014, p. 42).

THREE RECENT STUDIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

As a check on the validity of New Zealand studies, the research team paid attention to three recent reports in the United Kingdom. The first is a social return on investment analysis for the Scottish charity, Right There (Clifford et al., 2024). Right There offers person-centred and holistic services that are tailored to meet everyone’s needs, strengths and aspirations to prevent homelessness and to help keep families together. The report presents an outcomes framework to measure the difference made by those services, including sets of statistical indicators that allow a financial evaluation of the outcomes being achieved. It finds that Right There generates a social benefit of at least £308.6m, based on one year’s cohort of referrals.

The link between that study and this study is that the charity enables those supported to find a ‘safe place to call home’ (p. 14 of the report, emphasis added). This provides a foundation for the well-known five pillars of wellbeing reproduced in Figure A1 below. The report constructs six archetypes of people who take advantage of the services provided by Right There. It then uses a range of data sources to estimate current and ongoing benefits enjoyed by each archetype, organised under nine categories:

- Housing outcomes
- Employment outcomes
- Substance use outcomes
- Problem debt outcomes
- Health outcomes
- Adult criminal justice outcomes
- Criminal Justice outcomes for children and young people
- Education and employment outcomes for children and young people
- Looked After Children outcomes

There is good data on the proportion of service users in each archetype, and so the analysis can sum the total benefits of the programme in a year.

FIGURE A1: FIVE PILLARS OF WELLBEING



Source: Clifford, Hopkins and Cooke (2024, p. 18).

The second report was undertaken by NEF Consulting for Refuge, which is the United Kingdom's largest provider of specialist domestic violence services, supporting more than 6500 women and children on any single day (Baraki & Lupton-Paez, 2021). The analysis found that Refuge generates an average of £8.24 in social value for every £1 invested as a result of benefits to women and children under the following categories:

- Safety (being safe, feeling safe)
- Health (physical health, mental health)
- Social wellbeing (reconnection to family/friends/community, confidence)
- Economic wellbeing (freedom from financial abuse, access to benefits, return to employment, relief from debt burden and volunteering and training)

The analysis was careful to consider deadweight benefits (which would have occurred without the services), attribution (allowing for the contribution of other services) and displacement (where benefits produced by the programme resulted in an equivalent worsening of outcomes for people not in the programme). It also ran sensitivity tests for its key assumptions.

An appendix to the report provides some details on assumed values for benefits enjoyed by women and children in the programme. To illustrate, the benefit of feeling safe was measured using reported data on the client feeling safe (for women) and on all threatening and controlling behaviour ceased (for children). This was valued for women and for children using an estimate of willingness to pay to avoid psychological trauma (reduced to avoid double-counting), which was £5,103.79.

The third report was undertaken by LSE Consulting for the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (Proven et al., 2025). This report was commissioned as part of a three-year evaluation of Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which aimed for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, to be able to access appropriate support in safe accommodation when they need it.

The report discusses four commonly cited sources of information about the costs of domestic abuse in the United Kingdom and Europe. Oliver et al. (2019), for example, estimated the average cost of domestic abuse to a single victim in England at approximately £34,015 in 2019 values. Herbert et al. (2025) estimate, "Lifetime costs for childhood exposure to child maltreatment and/or parental domestic violence and abuse were £71,309 per child (non-fatal exposure), and £1,292,377 per child maltreatment fatality". The report advises that such information can be used to give monetised values to the harms that domestic violence programmes target. It also acknowledges some benefits that are difficult to monetise, including the economic benefits of protecting human rights.

APPENDIX 2:

About the Authors

PAUL DALZIEL

Paul is an economist with more than four decades of experience in teaching, research, and public policy in Aotearoa New Zealand. He completed his undergraduate degree in Economics at the University of Canterbury in 1980 and a Master's degree with Honours in 1981, before completing his PhD in Economics in 1985 after transferring his enrolment to the University of Otago. His early academic career coincided with the introduction of major economic reforms in New Zealand, and in 1988 he joined the Employment Working Group of the New Zealand Planning Council, beginning a long-standing role in applied economic research and public policy debate. Paul taught at the University of Canterbury and then Lincoln University, where he was appointed Professor of Economics in 2002 and spent most of his career in the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit, remaining there until his retirement at the end of 2024. He has published 11 books, 84 journal articles, and more than 400 research outputs, and has received multiple awards for excellence in teaching, research, and public service. He has also served as New Zealand Country Coordinator for the European Union's International Urban and Regional Cooperation programme and currently works as a research economist with the Wellbeing Economy Alliance Aotearoa.

EMERITUS PROFESSOR CAROLINE SAUNDERS

Caroline is an agricultural and environmental economist whose career spans international academia, applied research, and senior public leadership. After initially leaving school to work with horses, she returned to education and completed a BSc (Hons) in Agriculture and Agricultural Economics at the Bangor University in 1980, followed by a PhD in Agricultural Economics at the Newcastle University. From 1985 to 1996 she worked in Agricultural Economics and Food Marketing at Newcastle, where she co-established the first undergraduate degree in Countryside Management. Following a visiting year in 1994/95, she joined Lincoln University permanently in 1996, becoming Professor of Trade and Environment Economics in 2001 and Director of the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU), a role she held until the end of 2024. Caroline has received numerous honours, including the NZIER Economics Award, appointment as an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit, Life Membership of the New Zealand Association of Economists, election as a Fellow of the Royal Society Te Apārangi, and the title of Distinguished Professor at Lincoln University. Her research has shaped international debates on food systems, trade, and environmental sustainability, particularly through her influential work on food miles and global value chains. She has also held significant Crown appointments, serving as Director of Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research from 2015 to 2023 and as a member of the Reserve Bank Monetary Policy Committee between 2019 and 2024.



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