



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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**Submission to the Ministry of Justice on
a common approach to understanding
Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wahine O Aotearoa (NCWNZ) is an umbrella group representing 288 organisations affiliated at either the national level or to one of our 20 branches. In addition to our organisational membership, about 260 women are individual members of branches. NCWNZ's function is to represent and promote the interests of New Zealand women through research, discussion and action.

This submission has been prepared by the NCWNZ Parliamentary Watch Committee and reflects the NCWNZ draft response to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on Violence against Women.

It is our member organisations that work directly with victims and families and they will be responding separately.

This submission follows the on-line Introduction sequence and addresses the questions contained in the discussion document in the 4 categories.

1. Family Violence and its Dynamics

1.1. Do you agree with how we have described family violence and its dynamics?

Family violence and its dynamics have been well described in the discussion document. The forms of violence outlined in Fact Sheet 1 give a comprehensive coverage of the variety of situations in which violence takes place and the types of violence experienced.

1.2. Do you see any benefit of discussing other forms of family violence within the framework? If so, what forms are most relevant to New Zealand?

The recorded family violence data show that there are proportional differences between different ethnicities. However, the forms of violence shown in Fact Sheet 1 should cover all situations.

2. Screening and identification of family violence

2.1. Do you have feedback on this discussion of screening for family violence?

Screening and identification is important and the proactive approaches outlined are supported. Fact Sheet 3 provides a wide-ranging listing of Indicators.

2.2. What makes it difficult for you to conduct effective family violence screening?

Not applicable for NCWNZ

2.3. In your area, are there services available to take referrals to conduct risk assessment, following screening?

Not applicable for NCWNZ

2.4. What needs to be done to support effective screening to occur, either within the framework or as part of efforts to implement it?

Supporting effective screening to occur will require the practitioners and service providers to examine their practices and to review the capability and experience of their staff.

2.5. Would you find the provision of a screening tool based on best available, local and international evidence valuable in your practice? If so, what are your needs?

Not applicable for NCWNZ

3. Risk Assessment

3.1. Do you have feedback on this discussion of risk assessment?

A common approach from service providers will be important. The risk factors covered in Fact Sheet 4 provide an excellent framework. An important point made is that as needs and behavior changes over time, risk must be continually assessed.

3.2. What support is needed to ensure that risk assessment is effective? (For example, the development of information sharing protocols between organisations, addressing barriers to accessing appropriate and timely risk management services, the development of mechanism/s to collate risk information from across agencies)

Information sharing protocols will be essential. It will also be important to have the staff involved with assessment to be trained and experienced.

3.3. Do you have guidance, tools or practice approaches within your organisation that align with this framework, or could help to develop the proposed approach

Not applicable for NCWNZ

4. Risk Management

4.1. Do you have feedback on this discussion of risk management?

The information covered here highlights the key points regarding risk management, but are all the service providers adequately staffed to meet the expectations outlined on page 26.

4.2. Is effective risk management possible within the current system? Do the services necessary for effective risk management exist? Do these services have the capacity to meet demand?

NCWNZ does not have sufficient information to comment on the available services and their capacity.

4.3. Are there mechanisms in place for coordinated, integrated risk management?

NCWNZ does not have sufficient information to comment.

4.4. What are the barriers to effective risk management?

Barriers would be the capacity of the service providers to provide the required services, and the framework for a coordinated common approach which needs to involve all providers and the statutory agencies. It would also be important to continually progress against performance measures.

4.5. Existing multi-agency risk assessment and management approaches all involve statutory agencies (e.g., Police, Corrections, CYF). What approaches do you think are needed to support families if they are experiencing violence but are not within the justice system?

Continued publicity campaigns by many service organisations, government agencies and service providers have raised community awareness of family violence. Information on “where to go for help” is also crucial. Then, when violence awareness is identified, families need to receive timely support.

The National Council of Women of New Zealand appreciates the opportunity to comment on the discussion document and supports this important work which the Ministry of Justice is leading.

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