

Christchurch Women's Refuge



Safe Families Strong Communities

Christchurch Women's Refuge Statement of Intent

- That equity, social justice and inclusion is available to all
- That the citizens of Canterbury will be empowered to live fulfilled lives free from violence and abuse
- That the children of Canterbury are safe in their homes and with their caregivers
- That Canterbury families are strong, robust and well connected to their community
- That communities within Canterbury have the confidence to recognise, respond and refer incidents of violence and abuse to appropriate services
- That Canterbury Māori and Pacific families are safe and receive culturally appropriate intervention
- That ethnic and migrant families in Canterbury are safe, well integrated into the wider community and receive culturally appropriate intervention
- That Christchurch Women's Refuge influences Government and non government organisations working with families affected by family violence in Canterbury to be well connected, share information and have a common goal for family wellbeing
- That all of Christchurch Women's Refuge operations, management and governance are conducted with excellence, integrity and leadership



If I'd stayed with him he would have killed me.

Thank you for joining me and the team at Christchurch Women's Refuge on the journey towards a violence-free Canterbury.

As you read through this document you will learn more about the crusade that Christchurch Women's Refuge has championed since 1973. I am extremely proud to be the caretaker of this strong legacy of hope and perseverance that was left to our city and to all the people of Canterbury by an earlier generation of courageous women. We have inherited their commitment to creating a better future for the next generation – a future free from violence and abuse, where women, children and families live fulfilled lives nourished by respect and connectedness.

We have achieved many milestones along the way and our services have evolved to provide a wraparound response to this debilitating family and community problem. With help from the community we have made impressive progress, but our goal of ensuring that all women and children are safe in their own homes is still far from being achieved.

There has never been a more vital time to continue and strengthen the momentum towards ending violence. We all agree that family violence is not OK, yet the statistics surrounding family violence remain truly tragic. Family violence is a community problem and it requires community solutions; we remain unwavering in our conviction that a solution can be found by working together.

I am sure that when you read how far we have come in confronting family violence you will be inspired to join us on this journey because together, we can create safe families and strong communities.

Annette Gillespie

Chief Executive Officer



A Long Journey, a Proud History

In 1973 a group of Christchurch women took inspiration from changes taking place in the United Kingdom. They decided that to really help advance the cause of women, they needed not only a space just for women, but a safe place for the women and their children who were living in fear in their own homes. Here, in New Zealand, in Canterbury.

Despite hostility and even open aggression, their courage and commitment saw the first women's refuge in New Zealand – the first women's refuge outside the United Kingdom – established here in Christchurch.

Since 1973 there have been many changes – legal, social and societal. Christchurch Women's Refuge has been part of many of those changes, by lobbying for amendments to laws and statutes, implementing community based services for women, raising community awareness and addressing the effects of family violence on children. What hasn't yet changed is that women and children still need refuge. Women and children are still terrified, brutalised and killed by their loved ones, and at Christchurch Women's Refuge we remain committed to protecting them and supporting them to become, and stay, safe.

But now, they know where to go for help. Now as a community we say openly that family violence is not OK. Now we are starting to acknowledge that family violence is a community issue that affects us all.

To have led the way in caring for and supporting New Zealand families is something that Christchurch Women's Refuge is very proud of. It is something that as Cantabrians we should all champion, value and work to maintain.

At Christchurch Women's Refuge we continue to help open the doors on family violence so that our families, women and children can achieve their basic human right to live safely and without fear in their own homes.

Christchurch Women's Refuge Today

Almost 40 years since Christchurch Women's Refuge founded the first New Zealand refuge it is still our mission to help create a society where women and children can be safe to live free of violence in their own homes.

From our offices in Christchurch and Rangiora we help approximately 335 families each year and we have supported literally thousands of Canterbury families since we first began the refuge movement. We now offer our services to a total population of approximately 436,000 people from Kaikoura to Ashburton, but we remain an independent, not-for-profit community agency that is at heart about people, families and futures.

While our priority is helping women and children become and stay safe, we do much more than that. We help both women and children rediscover their strengths, value and self reliance.

We provide a space to share experiences, feelings and possibilities with qualified social workers and with other survivors of family violence.

We support women to take back control over their own lives and the lives of their children.

We help children make sense of their experiences, plan to keep themselves safe and look forward to a violence-free future.

Perhaps most importantly, we help create a positive future by interrupting the cycle of violence in which children can grow to become adult victims or perpetrators of family violence.

As the family violence landscape continues to change, Christchurch Women's Refuge will also continue to evolve. We are no longer hidden behind closed doors, because family violence shouldn't be kept a secret. Family violence is in our communities, and Christchurch Women's Refuge will be there too, a highly visible and vocal advocate for the women, children and families for whom home is not a refuge.



Thanks for everything, starting from that first phone call when I was so distressed, right through refuge and the group.





Both my kids did the (Christchurch Women's Refuge children's education) course. They wanted to do it again and again.

The Family Violence Landscape

New Zealand has a major family violence problem. We are not alone – it's an epidemic that spans countries, continents and cultures, but in our country over half of the murders each year are family violence related. Since 1973 when refuge formed, New Zealand society has not become calmer and more peace loving, and family violence incidents are further fuelled by ready access to alcohol and drugs.

What has changed is that people are talking more about it, more incidents are being reported, the stigma of being a victim is diminishing and offenders are being held accountable for the harm they do to others. There is also a new approach to tackling the issue – servicing the family and placing the family firmly within a community context.

Family Violence – A Community Issue

At last family violence is being recognised as a community issue, not just a private domestic matter. In order to create a violence-free society, such community ownership of family violence is essential.

Different segments of the community – from Police, employers and churches to neighbours, families and many others – are now taking action to say 'It's Not OK'.

That is why Christchurch Women's Refuge forms and leads so many relationships and collaborations with other sectors of the community who work for the well-being of women and children – in this way we can continue to mobilise our local communities to refuse to accept family violence as a way of life.

This is the real way to effect long-term social change that can promise a better future for Canterbury.

What is Family Violence?

Family Violence is:

- partner or spouse abuse (whether in same or different sex relationships)
- child abuse and neglect
- elder abuse and neglect
- parental abuse by a child
- sibling abuse
- allowing a child to witness family violence
- **preventable**

How Do I Recognise It?

- Emotional and Psychological Abuse – playing mind games; making someone feel guilty; intimidation; controlling behaviour; yelling; name-calling; blaming and shaming; put-downs
- Physical Abuse – using force in any way that endangers or injures a person e.g. shoving, slapping, throwing things or punching
- Sexual Abuse – forcing another person to have sex, to perform or participate in sexual acts that they are not comfortable with, or forcing someone to watch pornography
- Financial Abuse – using money as a control method e.g. withholding money, controlling spending or refusing to pay child support
- Child Abuse and Neglect – emotional, sexual and/or physical abuse. It includes allowing or forcing children to witness violence or abuse and using children as pawns in custody disputes.

However it manifests itself, it is always about one person asserting power and control over others.



Every area of my life was affected ... my children, family, friends. They were left powerless. I wasn't capable of working. In the end all I had was him.

How Christchurch Women's Refuge Makes a Difference

Since 1973, approximately 11,000 people have reached out to us for support.

In the year 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 Christchurch Women's Refuge:

- received over 3940 calls
- assisted 81 women and 91 children with safe accommodation in our Residential Safe House for a total of 2270 bed-nights
- worked with a total of 976 clients – 407 women and 569 children – through our Early Intervention and Prevention services
- reached out to 2210 women named in Police Reports of Family Violence, to ensure their safety and that of their children

Who is Affected by Family Violence?

Our Clients – Women, Children and Families

There is no typical client of Christchurch Women's Refuge. Family violence is not found only amongst certain groups, cultures or ages. But there is some commonality – women and children are undoubtedly still the principal victims of family violence; in 87% of all police reports women are named as the victims of violence.

Women and children from all socio-economic groups, suburbs, ethnicities, ages, professions, levels of mental well-being and abilities can experience family violence.

Their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing, and that of their families, as well as their futures, can be severely compromised or damaged – often long-term.

That is why we work both with women and with children (this includes young men up to 17 years old). Within a family support model we offer separate group and individual programmes to children, to ensure their different needs are met appropriately. A family support model enables us to respond to the needs of families at whatever point they require assistance, whether that be in crisis or at a more considered point of their journey.

To build healthy and strong families we promote positive parenting to clients who are mothers, and we support safe male caregivers and grandparents.

Communities

Being a victim of family violence leads to an increase in physical and mental health problems, which can affect an individual both in and outside the family environment. Research indicates that children who experience or even witness family violence can have a higher chance of self harm, delinquency or criminality.

Victims of family violence often cannot contribute as fully to their community as they wish because of their restrictive domestic situations, and may also have an increased use of and need for social, police, legal and health services.

Businesses

Family violence increases costs for business through absenteeism, loss of productivity, tardiness, health issues and staff turnover. Women have reported that they were not allowed to work by abusive partners, or the emotional and physical toll of abuse resulted in time off or simply resigning.

Abusive partners can also be disruptive in the workplace, affecting not only their own productivity, but that of their workmates.





My kids are still exposed to unsafe things – like speeding – when they are with him. I hate that he’s allowed the kids, but I do what I can within the system.



How Christchurch Women’s Refuge Helps

Our services long ago evolved from being purely emergency services. Christchurch Women’s Refuge is focussed not only on our clients’ needs today, but their futures and the generations still to come.

Our services fall into three broad streams:

Creating Safe Families – Early Intervention Services:

Our social services staff offer support, advocacy, assistance with accessing essential services (e.g. financial, legal, health, housing etc) and professional referrals. We work hard to establish and maintain partnerships with community agencies and networks that collaborate to provide an integrated response to families in need.

Creating Safe Futures and Strong Communities – Prevention Services:

Core components of our Prevention Services are the ten-week women’s and children’s group, and women’s individual education programmes (all of which have Ministry of Justice approval). These programmes enable women and children to confront the abuse in their lives, and to secure the safe future they have begun by seeking support.

To help strengthen other agencies, government services and all sectors of our community to understand and refuse to tolerate family violence Christchurch Women’s Refuge forms, facilitates and participates in a wide range of collaborations, partnerships and networks with both traditional and non traditional providers.

We work hard to keep the issue of family violence foremost in people’s minds through our marketing efforts; we undertake research with other partners; we develop and redevelop service and programmes to meet evolving needs; and we work to educate the wider community on the issues and effects of family violence.

Getting Families to Safety – Crisis Management Services:

We run a free 24-hour crisis and support line and provide emergency residential services for up to 16 women and children at a time in our Safe House.

Our Services:

Education Programmes

We are approved to facilitate group programmes through the Ministry of Justice for children and group and individual programmes for women named on a Protection Order.

The 10-week programmes include topics on understanding abuse and realising who is responsible for abusive behaviour; legal support; impact of domestic violence on women and children; healthy relationships; formulating support plans and developing a deeper understanding of strengths and strategies to keep safe.

We are also an approved provider of crisis-management and early intervention services for Child, Youth and Family.

Support and Advocacy

Women and children are initially supported individually to determine their needs and identify a process that will work best for them. A risk assessment, safety plan and support network is included in a client plan that is then reviewed regularly to maintain progress and assess the family’s ongoing safety.

Information on other relevant agencies or services (e.g. budget services, accommodation support, or how to access legal aid) will be discussed and made available. We also support clients in the often intimidating practical process of disengaging themselves from an abusive situation e.g. by appearing in court, talking with police, or accessing financial support from government services.



To see a family with so many things to deal with move forward and be safe and happy – that makes it all worthwhile.

Christchurch Women's Refuge staff member

Family Violence Inter Agency Response Services

Based on our partnership with Canterbury Police, Christchurch Women's Refuge is a signatory to a Memorandum of Understanding. FVIARS incorporates appropriate sharing of information – such as that contained on Police reports of family violence – which can secure client safety. Victims of family violence who contact Police are then offered information and support services by Christchurch Women's Refuge.

Safe House

Christchurch Women's Refuge provides a Safe House for women and children requiring immediate safety from family violence. The Safe House can accommodate five families at any one time and has communal living arrangements. Residential services are offered in the context of women and children requiring immediate safety. Once that need is addressed, clients are referred to our Early Intervention and Prevention services and supported to make alternative safe living arrangements.

Crisis Line

Initial contact with Christchurch Women's Refuge is often via this free-phone support line. Our 24-hour Crisis Line provides support for women through information, education and referrals to other refuge services. The crisis line is also the way that most women and children access our emergency safe accommodation.

Capacity Building

To ensure that women and children have access to a wide reaching support network it is vital to support other agencies to recognise and respond to evidence of family violence. Christchurch Women's Refuge has established working relationships with other community agencies that also work for the well-being of women and children and we provide specialist training where appropriate. Our Employers' Toolkit was designed specifically to help build employers' capacity to recognise, respond and refer.

Community Education and Public Awareness

Encouraging social change requires community understanding and ownership of the problem of family violence, its effects and implications. To open the doors on family violence we participate in a wide range of collaborations, partnerships and networks with both traditional and non traditional service providers and proactively offer education to community groups, schools and other interest groups.

Christchurch Women's Refuge offers a recognised training environment for social workers, community interns, and Work and Income workplace schemes. We also invest significantly in the development of women in the community through our volunteers' programme.

In a wider community context we promote the issues and effects of family violence through our marketing efforts. These include producing literature (e.g. brochures and quarterly newsletters), maintaining our website (www.womensrefuge.co.nz), issuing media releases and making media comment and taking part in or running a range of community events.

Service and Social Evolution

To ensure that our services remain relevant to our clients and our community we undertake regular evaluation of our programmes and conduct research with other external partners, such as the University of Canterbury. This supports our professional perspective on matters relating to social policy which are connected to issues of family violence and the rights of women and children.



Refuge provided practical support and advice at a time when I wouldn't have been able to do it myself.



Refuge ... got me to look at my strengths and kept me focussed on the reality of the situation I had been living with. Having the support and focus strengthened me to get through a very difficult period.

Trusted Specialists

Achievements

- Christchurch Women's Refuge established the first refuge in New Zealand (1973)
- We estimate that we have supported approximately 11,000 people since we began
- First Women's Refuge to move from a Collective structure to a Governance/Management model
- Christchurch Women's Refuge joins Police and Child, Youth and Family in 1984 to form the Canterbury Abuse Intervention Project, the first local community/statutory agency partnership of its kind
- The first organisation to employ a children's advocate and to establish parallel children's services and programmes
- Providing services in North Canterbury since early 1990 and establishing a dedicated North Canterbury full-time office in Rangiora in 2003
- Separation of the Safe House and community office in Christchurch in 2002 to make Christchurch Women's Refuge and its work more accessible to the local community
- Commencing community development in Selwyn in 2008
- Champion Canterbury Award Medium-Large Charity finalist for three years and winner in 2009

Expertise

Our knowledge and experience is acknowledged by community, media and by central and local government. This is evident in our leadership and involvement in many networks and collaborations, and our requested participation in local and even national discussions, advisory boards and project groups relating to family safety and wellbeing.

Endorsements

- Ministry of Justice approval for women and children's education group programmes and women's individual programme.
- Child, Youth and Family approval to deliver crisis management, early intervention and rural services to women and children.
- Family and Community Services approval to deliver community development initiatives.
- Client Testimonials
 - "Thanks for opening my eyes."
 - "You have given me hope and courage."
 - "For the first time I felt I was not alone."
 - "I leave here with excitement...it's been an incredible journey and I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you."
 - "Thank you so much for all that you have done for me and my family."
 - "You guys went above and beyond to help me through a major part of my life's journey. Thank you from my heart."
 - "I wanted to let you know just how grateful I am for all the support you have given my family. I now see the diversity of the people who you help—women and children from all walks of life."
 - "Your (service related) course was more relevant to our organisation (than other courses) and more accessible. Our staff who attended were challenged and it definitely increased our awareness."

Organisational Structure

Unlike most refuges in New Zealand, in 1996 Christchurch Women's Refuge adopted a hierarchical management and governance structure more in line with other incorporated societies and now follows an organisational business model. This has been significant factor in our transformation and continued growth.

In 2009 we moved toward a more integrated and holistic family approach and our Family Support workers now work with women and children providing a 'whole of family' response model. In addition to their external qualifications or experience, staff undergo a comprehensive internal training programme. Their professional development is regularly reviewed and all staff have access to supervision.

As a recognised leader in the community sector we understand the value of a strong strategic vision that is driven by a dedicated management team. The Chief Executive Officer and each service area manager are highly regarded professionals in their own fields and all are actively involved in a range of community networks. General business operations and strategic direction are overseen by a skilled and committed Board of Governance who meet monthly.

We are regularly audited by Child, Youth and Family; the Ministry of Justice; Family and Community Services; and an external financial auditor.

Christchurch Women's Refuge is affiliated to Jigsaw, a national network of community agencies focussed on nurturing safe children and creating positive family environments that support them. This reflects our growing focus on children and holistic family services.



Refuge encouraged my son to do the Tamarirki (children's) programme. Everyone, including the school principal, has noticed a vast improvement.



The Facts About Domestic Violence in New Zealand

- Police deal with more than 73,000 family violence calls a year and attend one incident every seven minutes – but estimate that less than 15% of incidents are reported
- Women's refuges around New Zealand receive a crisis call every nine minutes
- On average 14 women and ten children are killed by a family member each year – that is one fatality every two weeks
- Family violence costs New Zealand over \$8 billion per year
- 75,000 children witness family violence each year. As a result, they have higher chances of becoming victims, and of delinquency and criminality
- One third of women experience intimate partner violence (physical and sexual) in their lifetime
- One fifth of women experience severe physical violence from a partner
- Over 260 New Zealand women, children and men have been killed in 2000-2009 by family members. 41 of those people died in 2009
- Reported incidences of family violence in New Zealand rose 18% in the last year. In Canterbury they increased 14%
- Half of all New Zealand homicides each year are family violence related
- New Zealand ranks third highest for incidences of child abuse out of 30 OECD countries
- 70% of child abuse cases are within a family violence context
- Abused women are most at risk when they threaten or proceed with separation from their abuser

Supporting Christchurch Women's Refuge

Christchurch Women's Refuge is not a government agency. We are an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works locally to support the creation of safe families and strong communities, now and in the future.

Approximately 30% of our funding comes from government contracts; for the rest we rely on grants from Trusts, Foundations and gaming societies, and the generosity of Canterbury businesses and general public. This may be in the form of a direct donation or sponsorship, or by support of Christchurch Women's Refuge's various fundraising efforts.

Community support is essential to us. It assists us to support women and children create safe, healthy futures; it allows us to share the true impact of family violence with the wider community, and invite their participation in confronting the issue; it enables women and children without Protection Orders to access education programmes that can change their lives; and it helps to provide a safe place of refuge.

There are many ways you can join Christchurch Women's Refuge in making change:

- If you or your children are a victim of family violence, contact us to begin the change today
- Support someone you know to access our services if you think they may be affected by family violence
- Your business might like to consider a sponsorship or partnership
- Donate goods and items needed by clients
- Make a direct donation – you can even do it online
- Volunteer your time – we have a range of options and tasks
- Help raise public awareness by requesting information or a talk from us
- Start Payroll Giving and encourage your colleagues to do the same
- Be a friend on our database and/or Facebook page
- Organising a fundraising event on Christchurch Women's Refuge's behalf
- Make a bequest
- Let your friends know about the work that we do

To find out more about how you can support Christchurch Women's Refuge create safe families and strong communities, visit www.womensrefuge.co.nz or call 0800 1 REFUGE (0800 1 733 843).



“ I have never looked back. From the day I left, I never second-guessed myself, never.



Steps in the Journey

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| <p>1973 First Women's Refuge established in Christchurch</p> <hr/> <p>1977 Human Rights Act outlaws discrimination on a number of grounds, including sex and marital status</p> <hr/> <p>1980 Family Proceedings Act requires that a Family Court judge cannot dissolve marriages until satisfied that custody, maintenance and welfare arrangements for any children are the best possible</p> <hr/> <p>1980 Christchurch Women's Refuge Community Services founded</p> <hr/> <p>1981 Christchurch Women's Refuge joins ten other refuges to form the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges</p> <hr/> <p>1982 The Domestic Protection Act 1982 introduces non-violence orders that give police powers of arrest without laying formal criminal charges</p> <hr/> <p>1984 Ministry of Women's Affairs established to improve the status of women and to work towards the achievement of social, political, and economic equality</p> <hr/> <p>1984 Christchurch Women's Refuge helps form Canterbury Abuse Intervention Project (CAIP), the first network of statutory and community agencies supporting a combined voice against family violence</p> <hr/> <p>1984 United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is ratified by New Zealand</p> <hr/> <p>1985 Section 28(3) of the Crimes Act (1961) removed, finally making it illegal for a husband to rape his wife</p> <hr/> <p>1989 Children and Family Act introduces the Family Group Conference as a means of making decisions about a child or young person and made "best interests of the child" the first consideration in removing a child from a parent's care. The Act also provided for a Commissioner for Children</p> <hr/> <p>1994 Christchurch Women's Refuge lobbies for review of domestic protection legislation</p> | <p>1995 Domestic Violence Act. Significant changes were the recognition of psychological abuse (including causing or allowing a child to see or hear violence) as a form of family violence; introduction of Protection Orders that remained valid whether the woman left the violent person or not; increasing the range of applicants who could apply for a Protection Order e.g. flatmates, lesbian and gay couples, extended whānau/family members; and introduction of compulsory programme attendance for the violent person and optional programmes for protected persons (including children)</p> <hr/> <p>1995 Christchurch Women's Refuge and Police partnership established; Christchurch Women's Refuge undertakes domestic violence training for Police</p> <hr/> <p>1996 Christchurch Women's Refuge moves from 'collective' to 'management and governance' structure</p> <hr/> <p>1998 Christchurch Women's Refuge Children Services established</p> <hr/> <p>2002 Te Rito – New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy – established</p> <hr/> <p>2003 Christchurch Women's Refuge establishes full-time office in Rangiora, North Canterbury</p> <hr/> <p>2004 Care of Children Act – emphasises maintaining family links after adult relationship breakdown and appoints a lawyer to act for the child in parental disputes. 'The best interests of the child' are paramount. However, in practice there can be a conflict between 'best interest' in regard to maintaining relationships with both parents and children's safety</p> <hr/> <p>2005 Christchurch Women's Refuge undertakes domestic violence training for Work and Income</p> <hr/> <p>2005 Christchurch Women's Refuge partners with Accident Compensation Corporation to pilot the first specialist programme for Child Witnesses of family violence</p> |
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| <p>2005 Christchurch Women's Refuge partners with Police and Māori services to develop the Christchurch Safety Team, a response to families at highest risk</p> <hr/> <p>2007 Christchurch Women's Refuge launches 'Igniting Change', the Canterbury response to the national 'It's Not OK' campaign</p> <hr/> <p>2008 Christchurch Women's Refuge develops its Employers' Toolkit, to support businesses in recognising, responding and referring issues of family violence</p> <hr/> <p>2008 Repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act, removing 'reasonable force' as a justification for child abuse</p> <hr/> <p>2009 Christchurch Women's Refuge becomes a partner of the Jigsaw network</p> <hr/> <p>2009 Christchurch Women's Refuge makes a submission to the parliamentary select committee in support of the Enhancing Safety Bill, a review of the Domestic Violence Act</p> <hr/> <p>2009 Christchurch Women's Refuge adopts family support model</p> <hr/> <p>2009 Christchurch Women's Refuge awarded Medium/Large Enterprise Winner of the charity section of the Champion Canterbury Awards</p> <hr/> <p>2010 Police Safety Orders introduced – orders issued on the spot by police officers who have safety concerns for a person, but lack sufficient evidence to charge another person with a violent offence</p> <hr/> <p>2010 Christchurch Women's Refuge withdraws its membership from the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges to pursue a more holistic approach to family violence</p> |
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The help and support all contributed
so much to where I now find myself
– strong, confident and independent.

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