

Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

Family Violence Security Service Makes 100 Canterbury Families Safer

In just one year more than 100 families have become safer from repeat family violence whilst remaining in their own homes, thanks to the Shine safe@home service offered in Canterbury by Aviva (formerly Christchurch Women's Refuge).

The service commenced in Canterbury in September 2012. The Ministry of Justice provided funding to physically upgrade the security of 30 homes per year, for two years. By the end of October 2013 - just 13 months later - 113 homes had been upgraded and 112 women, one man and 182 children who had been identified as being at highest risk of repeat family violence had become safer.

The Shine safe@home service was first developed in 2008 by Auckland-based family violence agency Shine. The service physically enhances a house's security, reducing the ability of a person who has perpetrated family violence to break back in. Children and adults at greatest risk of repeat family violence can thus remain in their own home, more safely. They are also connected to Aviva's other support services, and/or those of other agencies, so that they can continue their journey towards fulfilled, violence-free lives.

Need for the service in Canterbury has dramatically exceeded all expectations. This is due to the significant increase in the severity of family violence reported by local agencies since 2011, as well as the extremely difficult Canterbury housing situation. A lack of affordable, safe accommodation in the city means that leaving the family home is simply not an option for many people even though they are experiencing violence at home.

"Shine safe@home enables those who have experienced the trauma of abuse to become safer and still remain at home, thereby preventing yet further trauma arising from having to relocate, very often with children" says Aviva CEO Nicola Woodward. "It offers enhanced personal safety and exemplifies social justice – both of which lie at the heart of our work at Aviva - as well as removing the stress of entering the earthquake-affected housing market. It is just a win-win for Canterbury families already trying to overcome violence and the many challenges they face along the way, most particularly in Christchurch."

The service has not only been a success in terms of uptake, but has resulted in reduced fear and anxiety, and more social and emotional stability, for the adults and children who have benefitted from the service.

Post-service assessments to date with 50 clients show that since receiving the service:

- 96% of clients experienced no further incidence of violence at home
- On a scale from 1 (very unsafe) to 7 (very safe), adults' feelings of safety at home improved from an average of 2 to an average of 6
- 92% of adults reported sleeping better
- 82% of adults reported feeling more self-confident

All enquiries, 24-hours: 0800 AVIVA NOW (0800 28482 669) or (03) 378 3847

Web: www.avivafamilies.org.nz Email: enquiries@avivafamilies.org.nz

PO Box 32 034, Christchurch 8147 Fax: (03) 377 2847

Rangiora correspondence: PO Box 198, Rangiora 7440 Fax: (03) 313 1082



- 96% of adults reported feeling less anxious
- No child had witnessed or been present at an assault at home
- The number of children showing aggression reduced by 69%
- The number of children with sleeping issues reduced by 82%

Shine safe@home in Canterbury is partially funded by the Ministries of Justice and Social Development until June 2014. Support from community groups and businesses has been crucial in enabling houses beyond the target numbers to be upgraded and to sustain the service long-term. The full service costs on average \$3,700 per household. You can support Shine safe@home – or other Aviva services – at www.avivafamilies.org.nz

If you have any questions or concerns related to family violence please call our free phone 0800 AVIVA NOW (0800 28482 669), 24-hours a day, or visit www.avivafamilies.org.nz. In an emergency always call 111.

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For further information contact:

Nicola Woodward
Chief Executive Officer
M: 027 245 0255

About Aviva

- Aviva supports New Zealanders to become their best, free from family violence, by providing a unique range of specialist family violence services
- We support children, women and men – individually or as families - to overcome family violence
- We are an independent, local charity which was first established as Christchurch Women's Refuge – New Zealand's first women's refuge – in 1973
- Aviva rebranded in May 2013. Our new name expresses the positivity, potential and new life that underpins the services we provide and the spirit in which we offer them.

Key Statistics for Financial Year July 2012 – June 2013

- Total Clients – 1,498 – up 14% on previous year
- Residential clients – 95 – down 32% on previous year because average length of stay is up 41%
- Calls to Support and Information Line – 3,605 – up 5% on previous year and 53% on pre-quake year (2009 – 2010)
- Shine safe@home clients – 68 households (first year of service)
- ReachOut men's service – 60 (first year of service)

How Aviva supports people to become free from violence:

- 24-hour support via 0800 AVIVA NOW, a free phone line for anyone needing safety, information or advice
- Temporary Safe House accommodation for children and women in the Christchurch Women's Refuge
- Individual support for children, women and men and access to other agencies or services

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- Family safety planning
- Access to Ministry of Justice approved education programmes for children, women and men
- Proactive outreach and support for women and men named on Police Incident Reports
- Shine safe@home, a service which improves the physical security of the homes of women and children who are at highest risk of repeat family violence
- ReachOut specialist early intervention support for men who have perpetrated family violence
- Specialist peer support from women and men who have overcome family violence to others on their own journey
- No Interest Loans for those experiencing family violence and on low incomes
- Community development, education and training.