



waves

Waitakere Anti-Violence Essential Services

WAVES Trust

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Auckland Council

Submission on the Auckland Council Long Term Plan (LTP)

Submitted by:

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We wish to speak with the Council about our submission if that is possible

WAVES Trust is an interagency family violence (FV) network organisation. The membership is primarily government and non-government service providers who work in the area of FV. There are also members who are not specifically FV agencies but their work complements or supports efforts to reduce violence in Waitakere.

We are committed to strengthening the work of those who support and inform victims of FV and those who hold offenders accountable and support them to make positive changes to their behaviour. WAVES acts to support and resource all member agencies to practice to the highest standards of integrity and professional ethics.

WAVES Trust provides:

- A networking forum to encourage and support statutory and community services to provide integrated and collaborative services to reduce FV
- Links to other organisations through the interagency network
- Community advocacy and representation on initiatives that target FV
- Information about best practice in FV intervention and support for the implementation of best practice

- Primary prevention, capacity building and education opportunities for those working to reduce FV
- Contract management of interagency projects and contracts
- Access to current, relevant research Monitoring of community initiatives such as the Waitakere Family Violence Court
- An overview of information deficits and initiation of local research

WAVES Trust is a charitable trust. Governance is vested in the Board chaired by trustee Waitakere Family Court Judge David Mather. There are 5 trustees including David Mather, **Penny Hulse (Auckland Council Deputy Mayor)**, Chris Davidson (NZ Probation Service), Steve Kehoe (NZ Police) and Tiaria Fletcher (Lifewise Family Services).

There are currently four staff members – a Manager, two part-time Coordinators, and an Administrator, as well as one contracted part-time Project Leader.

Summary

We thank the Auckland Council for this opportunity to submit on the Long Term Plan (LTP). In our submission we outline the special relationship developed by the legacy Waitakere City Council with the Waitakere FV sector through Council's support of the Waitakere Taskforce on Family Violence. We make the following recommendations:

1. That Council should begin conversations with FV networks and services to explore ways of delivering on the five roles within a Coordinated Plan of Community Action on FV across the Auckland region.
2. That Council improve communications and relationships with the FV sector networks both in Waitakere and around Auckland to ensure that Council representatives and policies are informed by reliable and good quality information and advice on FV.
3. That Council formally acknowledge its relationship with the Waitakere Taskforce in the LTP and Auckland Plan, and build that relationship into the long term structure of Council operations along with those from other areas of Auckland.

Background

WAVES Trust’s role in the community is to provide services and information to the network of FV service providers and related agencies in Waitakere and advocate for the network’s interests to local and national government. The FV sector engages with individuals and families including perpetrators and victims of, and witnesses to, violence directed at intimate partners, at children, or towards other members of the family/household such as elders and extended family.

In Waitakere WAVES Trust, its network members, and the wider FV sector have had the privilege of enjoying a long and very fruitful relationship with the legacy Waitakere City Council. That relationship was formalised through the Mayoral (now Waitakere) Taskforce on Family Violence that was co-convened by former Mayor Bob Harvey and Dr Pita Sharples to bring leaders from local and regional government agencies, and local government into conversation with local FV providers and community representatives. Currently the Taskforce Steering and Advisory groups include (but are not limited to) representatives from:

MSD	Police	CYF
Probation	Housing New Zealand	Work and Income
Waitemata DHB	Auckland Council	Family Court
Families Commission	Office of the Children’s Commissioner	

and local NGOs including:

WAVES Trust	Western Refuge	Man Alive
Violence Free Waitakere	Waitakere Abuse & Trauma Counselling	
WestFono	Pacific Island Safety and Prevention Project	
Shakti	NZ Ethnic Social Services	Barnardos
Lifewise Family Services	Waitakere Community Law	Victim Support

The Waitakere Taskforce Steering Group is also supported on matters affecting Maori by a Maori Roopu, Tatai Atawhai, which is made up of Maori community leaders and NGO representatives from some of the services listed above.

Operational matters for the Taskforce were originally undertaken by a dedicated Project Leader residing within Waitakere City Council, this position has continued to be supported within the new Auckland Council. The incumbent, Kelly Maung, works closely with WAVES Trust to implement Taskforce strategies and projects, and WAVES also facilitates the Taskforce Advisory Group.

The Waitakere Taskforce model is cheap and in our opinion very effective. Taskforce representatives are funded by their own organisations to attend meetings. The benefits for individuals and organisations of belonging to the Taskforce are recognised as bringing

greater participation in shaping the direction of public prevention initiatives, networking and community development opportunities, and expanded opportunities to deliver and receive practical and political support for services addressing gaps and needs identified in service provision.

The Taskforce groups meet to discuss prevention initiatives, service provision priorities and problems in the Waitakere area.

- The Steering Group provides advocacy for and support to the FV sector through expanding understanding of FV at the political level and supporting the sector's relationship with local and national government. The group sets priorities for action based upon advice from the Advisory Group and Tatai Atawhai.
- The Advisory Group and Tatai Atawhai liaise with the grass-roots FV services and community groups engaging with people needing support around issues of FV. They feed this information into the Steering Group to inform priorities.
- The Project Leader works in conjunction with WAVES Trust to implement projects addressing the Steering Group's priorities by coordinating working groups drawn from the Advisory Group, Tatai Atawhai, and the community and FV sector to find solutions that meet local needs or develop prevention strategies with the support of other organisations like the 'It's Not Ok' Campaign. A budget is provided by Council to support some of the financial costs of these initiatives and WAVES Trust provides additional staffing and funding support.
- The Taskforce Project Leader organises events to keep the community informed of Taskforce activities and coordinates the annual White Ribbon Day Parade through Henderson.

Priorities set by the Waitakere Taskforce Steering Group for 2010-2012 concern focusing services on identifying and reducing gaps in service provision to children, Maori, and ethnic communities. WAVES Trust has supported these priorities by engaging a coordinator to research and report on the needs of children and ethnic communities, and funded Tatai Atawhai to commission a literature review and further research on Maori and FV in Waitakere. The Project Leader has worked with other services and experts to address the Steering Group priorities including:

- Refresher training for the police on how to engage with children present at FV callouts, including provision of wallet card stocks that list children and youth helpline numbers to police for distribution.
- Provision of a slightly modified free MSD resource drawing attention to keeping children safe that is now sent out to clients by Western Refuge and Victim Support. This is available to other services if they wish to use it.
- An Ethnic Action Plan to support development of a local network and pilot project with the Fijian Indian Community.
- Release of the Blow The Whistle on Violence campaign materials in Waitakere.
- Profiling FV sector agencies and their work to Citizen's Advice Bureau volunteers.

- Billboards featuring anti-violence and healthy families messaging.

The strength of the Taskforce model is that it promotes communication and cooperation between the grassroots community members and groups with the FV network, with clinical leaders from service providers, organisational and regional managers across a broad range of government and NGO agencies, and with local and national politicians. We believe that this model has worked well to promote a strong and cohesive FV sector in Waitakere that has good working relationships internally and with statutory agencies on a practical level as well as with local and national government at the political level.

Under the legacy Waitakere City Council the Waitakere Taskforce provided a platform from which the FV sector could communicate with Council on matters concerning the sector and facilitated Council's provision of support to the sector. Within the new Auckland Council the vestiges of that relationship remain in the form of the Project Leader role and the continuing support provided by Councillors such as (and especially) Deputy Mayor Penny Hulse. But the Waitakere Taskforce is no longer structurally embedded within Council and currently no opportunities exist to extend similar opportunities for representation to FV sectors in other areas of Auckland. In our submission below we outline why we believe the Auckland Council needs to address the lack of structural mechanisms to allow groups like the Waitakere Taskforce to feed information into council from local and regional FV sectors.

Submission

We thank the Council for its ongoing employment of the Waitakere Taskforce Project Leader who provides considerable support for Waitakere local FV sector. We also acknowledge and thank the Mayor for his support of Taskforce and willingness to engage in various public awareness campaigns over the past two years, and offer special thanks and appreciation to Deputy Mayor Penny Hulse for her substantial contribution to the Waitakere Taskforce and for her ongoing support of its activities.

WAVES Trust provides this submission on behalf of the network of FV service providers working with families in Waitakere. As has already been discussed in the Background to this submission, the Waitakere FV sector was privileged in the past to have a strong relationship with Waitakere City Council through the Mayoral Taskforce on Family Violence, now the Waitakere Taskforce. In this submission we request that Auckland Council address the mechanisms by which it will engage with FV sectors across the region in the future.

Please Note: Our submission specifically addresses the relationship between Council and the FV sector in Waitakere but also makes recommendations that Council should improve its relationships with the sector in other parts of Auckland. We make these recommendations with the understanding that other sectors and regions may wish to engage with Council on different levels and in different ways to Waitakere and our submission should not be read as implying that we wish to impose the Waitakere way on other regions.

A Coordinated Plan for Community Action

WAVES and the Waitakere FV network work to support a Coordinated Plan for Community Action supported by the Ministry of Social Development to raise awareness within all levels of society (individuals, social groups, businesses and organisations, and government) about FV, its unacceptability, and provide education and support to those in crisis. A coordinated plan includes roles for local government, including:

1. Provide leadership on local responses to FV
2. Support local campaigns to end FV
3. Use council communications to promote violence prevention messages and activities
4. Include a focus on FV within work on social wellbeing
5. Sponsor the development of local violence-free strategies and initiatives¹

Council is currently enacting these five roles through its support of the work of the Waitakere Taskforce, responding to Waitakere needs in the Waitakere area. The same is not happening elsewhere in Auckland and we believe that Council needs to begin discussions with FV networks other regions about how to address this.

¹ <http://www.areyouok.org.nz/files/test/resources/coordinated-community-action-wheel.pdf> (Accessed 22 March 2012). Copy attached as a supplementary document.

WE RECOMMEND: that Council should begin conversations with FV networks and services to explore ways of delivering on the five roles within a coordinated plan of community action on FV across the Auckland region.

Strengthening Communications between Council and FV Networks

Under the legacy Waitakere City Council, the Mayoral Taskforce on Family Violence provided a platform from which Council and its Mayor could provide leadership in the development of local responses to FV. However, the current Auckland LTP does provide a clear sense of Council leadership on FV permeating all levels of Council and being driven from the Mayor. Instead most discussion on safety and community is narrowly focused on the activities of local boards providing the conduit for community concerns into Council (vol.2, pp.99, 112-3). WAVES Trust has already submitted to Council, both in a letter and in our submission on the Auckland Plan, that in our experience local boards are insufficient to carry this leadership as their members hold limited terms, are often not well informed about FV and some do not see its relevance to Council activities, and have little support to assess the merits of public requests or to understand how well supported these requests are within the wider sector.² Likewise, the Social Policy Forum has not delivered improved communications pathways into Council, instead it has been inaccessible.

WE RECOMMEND: that Council improve communications and relationships with the FV sector networks both in Waitakere and around Auckland to ensure that Council representatives and policies are informed by reliable and good quality information and advice on FV.

Maintaining Future Links with Council

WAVES Trust is concerned that without the support of a dedicated Project Leader and the support of a small number of incumbent Councillors and Local Board Members the Waitakere Taskforce could lose its connection with Council. At the local level, we would like Waitakere Taskforce's relationship with Council to be formally acknowledged in the LTP and the Auckland Plan, and be referenced in Council policies on FV. We believe this should also be the case for other arrangements that Council enters into with FV sectors/networks across the Auckland Region.

WE RECOMMEND: that Council formally acknowledge its relationship with the Waitakere Taskforce in the LTP and Auckland Plan, and build that relationship into the long term structure of Council operations along with those from other areas of Auckland.

We thank the Council for this opportunity to submit on the Long Term Plan, we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Auckland Council.

² This has been the subject of earlier correspondence between WAVES Trust and Council.