

Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families

Terms of Reference

Background

The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families (the Taskforce) was formed in 2005 to lead and co-ordinate interagency action to address family violence, including the abuse and neglect of children and older persons. During this time it has overseen a range of cross-sector initiatives to address family violence, including the “It’s not OK” campaign, reforms to domestic violence legislation, and the establishment of the Family Violence Death Review Committee.

In October 2012, Government recognised that a whole-of-government response to family violence must continue [SOC Min (12) 22/2 refers]. It sought to ensure that work to address family violence is strongly linked with other strategic priorities, particularly the White Paper for Vulnerable Children, the Better Public Services result areas, and Whānau Ora.

These Terms of Reference reflect and replace the original Terms of Reference for the Taskforce, and strengthen the process for managing conflicts of interest [as required by CAB Min (11) 37/28]. They also reflect:

- the Taskforce’s Kawa statement, developed by the Taskforce in 2008
- changes to the Chair and Deputy Chair arrangements made in 2011
- changes to the oversight and operations of the Taskforce made in 2012
- current membership.

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed, and if necessary amended, in December 2013, when the current appointments for Chair and Deputy Chair expire [CAB Min (11) 37/28 refers].

Taskforce Vision

The vision of the Taskforce is that all families and whānau have healthy, respectful stable relationships, free from violence.

This is the vision that the Taskforce has been building on since 2005.

The Role of the Taskforce

The role of the Taskforce is to:

- identify and prioritise actions to strengthen government and non-government initiatives to prevent family violence, including the abuse and neglect of children and older persons
- identify policy, legislative and service gaps and opportunities for alignment
- ensure that key actions are integrated across the government and non-government sectors
- commission information, analysis and advice as required
- provide advice on emerging issues.

Guiding principles

The Taskforce's Kawa statement of 2008 provides guiding principles for the way the Taskforce does its work.

As a Taskforce we agree to:

- collaborate, because that is what will create new solutions and make the biggest difference for New Zealand families
- put our agreed priorities first and not get stuck in our own patch
- balance courage with consideration as we strive to create new attitudes and behaviours
- work with each other in ways that are generous and cooperative and to use non-violent communication practices together
- maintain a curious approach, especially when we see the world differently
- respect the diverse experience and perspectives in our group and listen to all voices
- affirm often our belief that it can happen and it has begun to happen
- acknowledge contribution and achievement as we move forward
- take the initiative to “go for a coffee” with other members if there are issues or interactions causing tension amongst members.

Above all we hold the vision of all New Zealanders in safe, healthy, stable family relationships and do what it takes to bring this about.

The Taskforce

Membership

Membership comprises:

- Independent Chair (currently Mr Richard Wood, 5 December 2011 – 5 December 2013)
- Deputy Chair, Chief Executive, Ministry of Social Development (or delegated authority¹)
- Senior representatives of the following:²
 - Ministry of Social Development (Child, Youth and Family and/or Family and Community Services)
 - Ministry of Health
 - Ministry of Justice
 - Ministry of Education
 - New Zealand Police
 - Ministry of Women's Affairs
 - Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
 - Te Puni Kōkiri
 - Accident Compensation Corporation

¹ CAB Min (11) 37/28 provides authority for an MSD official to deputise in the role of Deputy Chair.

² All Taskforce members, and any nominated delegates, are “decision-makers” within their agency, and must be at a sufficient level of seniority to be able to make decisions for their agency including, where necessary, allocation of resource to support Taskforce. This is likely to be at least at Deputy Chief Executive level.

- Building and Housing Group, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- Director, Office of Ethnic Affairs
- Chief District Court Judge
- Principal Family Court Judge
- Children's Commissioner
- Chief Families Commissioner
- One representative from the Māori Reference Group
- One representative from the Pacific Advisory Group
- Three representatives from the *NGO Family Violence Prevention Alliance*
- One representative of the *Family Services National Advisory Council (FSNAC)*
- One disability sector representative.

Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chair and Deputy Chair have been appointed by the Associate Minister for Social Development for a term of two years, commencing on 5 December 2011 and expiring on 5 December 2013.

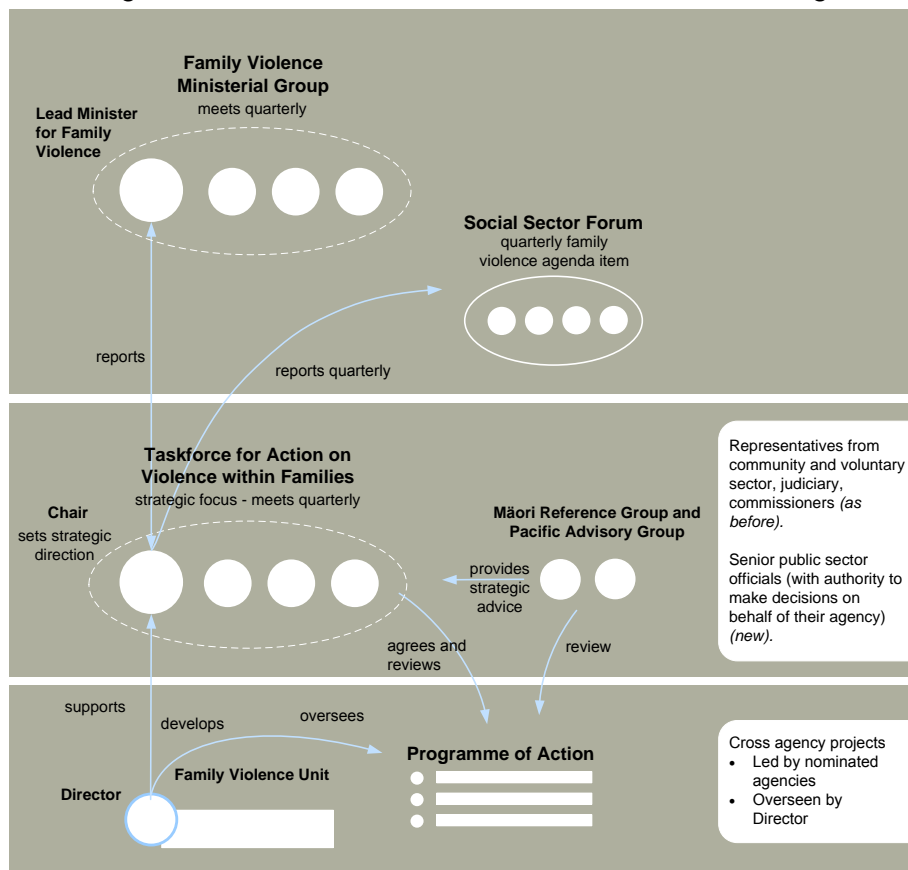
The position of Deputy Chair is intended to provide cover for times when the Chair may declare a conflict of interest. The Chief Executive, Ministry of Social Development, has the authority to appoint an MSD official to deputise in the role of Deputy Chair [CAB Min (11) 37/28 refers].

Meeting frequency

The Taskforce meets quarterly.

Supporting structures

This section provides context for the Taskforce by outlining other groups that provide support and oversight to the Taskforce and its work, as shown in the diagram below.



Family Violence Ministerial Group

The Family Violence Ministerial Group exists to:

- provide a high level of oversight of work to address family violence
- agree the work of the Taskforce
- ensure linkages with other strategic priorities.

Membership of the group includes: Associate Minister for Social Development (Chair), the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister for Social Development, the Minister of Police, the Minister of Housing, the Minister of Women's Affairs, the Minister of Māori Affairs, the Minister of Pacific Island Affairs, the Minister for Ethnic Affairs, the Minister for Whānau Ora and the Minister for Disability Issues.

The Family Violence Ministerial Group meets quarterly.

Social Sector Forum

In order to ensure better linkages with other government priorities including the White Paper for Vulnerable Children and the Better Public Service targets, the Social Sector Forum (SSF) has agreed to consider family violence as a regular agenda item once a quarter.

SSF comprises the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development, the Secretaries of Justice and Education, the Director-General of Health and the Deputy Chief Executive Building and Housing Group, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Representatives from central agencies (the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the State Services Commission and the Treasury) are ex officio members. Other Chief Executives are invited to attend from time to time.

The Commissioner of Police and the Chief Executives of Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministries of Women's and Pacific Island Affairs will, in particular, be invited to attend SSF for the items concerning family violence.

SSF Chief Executives meet monthly. Any issues that need to be dealt with between meetings will be considered at the Deputy Chief Executive Forum, which meets weekly.

Māori Reference Group and Pacific Advisory Group

The Māori Reference Group (MRG) and the Pacific Advisory Group (PAG):

- provide advice to the Taskforce on family violence-related policies, services and initiatives that impact on Māori and Pacific peoples in New Zealand
- oversee the development and implementation of specific programmes of action for Māori and Pacific people³
- review progress on the Taskforce's Programmes of Action.

A member of each group sits on the Taskforce.

³ *E Tu Whānau-ora: Programme of Action for Addressing Family Violence 2008-2013, and Programme of Action for Pacific Peoples: 2008 and Beyond.*

Family Violence Unit

The Family Violence Unit supports the work of the Taskforce. The Director:

- works with stakeholders, including MRG and PAG, to ensure that Taskforce work is connected to and supports other Government priorities.
- work with the Taskforce Chair and members to develop and oversee the Taskforce's work programme, and to increase government and NGO participation in, and ownership of, it.

Duties and responsibilities of Taskforce members

General

Taskforce members, and any nominated delegates, are “decision-makers” within their agency, and must be at a sufficient level of seniority to be able to make decisions for their agency including, where necessary, allocation of resource to support Taskforce work.

In order to ensure continuity and trust, members are expected to attend all scheduled Taskforce meetings. Where a member can not attend, a nominated delegate may attend.

Conflicts of interest

Taskforce members perform their functions in good faith. As most members are appointed *ex officio*, to represent an agency, a role or a function, it is recognised that they will bring particular perspectives to the Taskforce table. These are valid and to be respected.

In order, however, to maintain transparency, and manage any potential conflicts of interest, the Taskforce will maintain an interests register. All Taskforce members are asked to declare personal interests. This is part of the induction process for new members. The summary register will be reviewed at each Taskforce meeting and refreshed annually.

When members become aware that a potential conflict of interest exists they will discuss this with the Chair and withdraw from part or all of the relevant Taskforce meeting. If a member withdraws, this will be recorded on the register.

Information - sharing

Information shared within the context of Taskforce meetings will be subject to the usual rules of confidence and should not be used for any purpose other than that for which the information was provided. In the case of uncertainty, Taskforce members should check the appropriate use of information or material with the Chair.

Fees and allowances

The Taskforce is classified as a Group 4 Level 2 body under the Cabinet Fees Framework [CO (09) 5 refers].

The Independent Chair, and non-government members of the Taskforce⁴ are entitled to be paid fees for attendance at meetings. In addition, they will be entitled to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses as per the Allowances under the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951 as set out in Annex 1 of Cabinet Office Circular [CO (09) 5].

Official Information Act 1982

Requests for information held by the Taskforce are governed by the Official Information Act 1982. All requests for information will be treated as if the Taskforce is a part of the host agency (presently the Ministry of Social Development).

The host agency will process requests for information directed to the Taskforce in accordance with normal procedures, and will advise the Taskforce of information to be released under the requirements of the Act.

⁴ Specifically, members representing the Māori Reference Group, the Pacific Advisory Group, the NGO family violence prevention alliance, Family Services National Advisory Council, and the disability sector.