

Snapshot

Integrated Safety Response (ISR) evaluation

CONTEXT

The family violence Integrated Safety Response (ISR) pilot was officially launched in Christchurch on 4 July 2016. A second pilot site (Waikato) came into operation on 25 October 2016. The ISR pilot is part of the Government's broader programme of work on family violence and sexual violence.

ISR takes a whole-of-family and whānau approach to consider the safety of adults and children impacted by violence, and to work with people who use violence to prevent further harm. By combining dedicated staff, funded specialist services, and an intensive case management approach, ISR seeks to create better outcomes for families and whānau at risk.

The majority of funding under ISR is invested in non-government organisation (NGO) services.

The first evaluation of ISR was undertaken in 2017. It found evidence of families and whānau feeling safer and experiencing improved wellbeing. Areas for development included: responsiveness to Māori, family and whānau-centred practice, and resourcing for services.

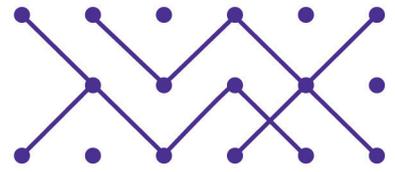
ISR has continued to evolve as it has been piloted. All agencies and partners involved in ISR are committed to continuous development and learning to find the most effective ways to support those families and whānau affected by family violence.

EVALUATION

The evaluation of ISR was carried out by a kaupapa Māori team and Dr Elaine Mossman led a synthesis report research team. A reference group comprising research experts provided critical review of methodologies and results.

The evaluation is made up of six components, which capture the voices of families, whānau, people impacted by violence, people that use violence, and providers. This included interviews and a survey of community providers and government agencies involved in ISR, a policy review, cost-benefit analysis, Kaupapa Māori evaluation, in-depth 12-week case review and re-offending and re-victimisation analysis.

The findings show that the ISR is making a positive difference for many families and whānau. The evaluation also identifies opportunities that build on current results.



FINDINGS

The distinct features that define ISR, relative to other family violence crisis response systems, are better understood

These include:

- Daily triage of all new episodes of family violence
- The whole of family and whānau approach that includes a focus on the perpetrator, whilst ensuring the safety of victims and children is paramount
- Government mandate and ring-fenced funding to deliver ISR, which has resulted in strong and enduring participation by government agencies
- Provision of a dedicated team of staff to oversee operations
- Funding of community-based specialist positions to provide outreach and intensive short-term safety work
- A purpose-built electronic case management system that tracks tasks and enables information sharing.

The model's multiple elements and functions have been designed to work as an integrated package. Selectively implementing some elements, while dispensing with others, was seen as likely to significantly 'dilute' the effectiveness of the model.

The ISR model is effective

Evidence strongly supports the conclusion that ISR delivers an improved service response for families and whānau.

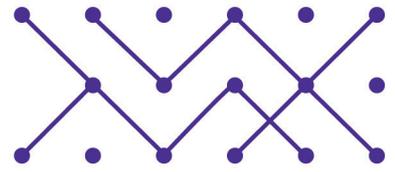
This was evident in:

- Rapid responses routinely being made to victims, family and whānau, enabled especially by the 7 days a week triage, multi-agency participation, and efficient sharing of information

88% of survey respondents believed ISR information sharing kept families and whānau safer.

88% of survey respondents reported collaborative working and trusting relationships were "better" or "much better" with ISR

- More effective outreach by specialist ISR workers offering greater opportunity for individuals, families and whānau to consider and accept support



- Better access to the support services, brought about through improved relationships and connections among ISR partners (community and government)

Of those that initially engaged, at least 73% of people that had experienced violence received support, including: safety alarms, safe housing, counselling, legal support, parenting programmes, safety programmes, alcohol and drug programmes, and mental and physical health support (based on the 12-week case review).

The evaluation found evidence of improvement in wellbeing as a result of this support. Self-report assessments post-ISR indicated families and whānau felt safer and were better connected to support networks. More families and whānau were enacting their safety plans, as indicated by statistically significant increases in reporting of repeat low-level family violence to Police.

Some indications of reduced rates of family violence behaviour following ISR were found, and included the following:

- Significant reductions in self-reported exposure to all forms of family violence post-ISR, including victim's experiences of physical harm, and children witnessing family violence

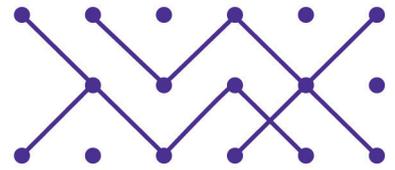
Particularly encouraging is a 48% relative reduction in children witnessing or being exposed to family violence (based on analysis of Support Service data).

- Evidence of reduced risk of continued use of violence amongst perpetrators receiving support, reflected in their confidence in their ability to manage anger and maintain respectful relationships (based on a combination of self-report and support worker assessment)
- Māori impacted by violence living within one of the ISR sites had an 18% reduction in family violence offence related re-victimisation compared to matched controls from non-ISR sites.

Overall, there is 'good' evidence that ISR is responsive to Māori when assessed against the Whānau-Centred Delivery Model

On a 5-point scale from 'poor' to 'excellent', the Kaupapa Māori researchers found there was:

- 'Good' evidence of effective relationships that benefit whānau
- 'Very good' evidence of whānau rangatiratanga
- 'Very good' evidence of Kaupapa Māori partners having a culturally competent workforce
- 'Good' evidence that ISR strives to operate within a whānau-centred approach
- 'Good' evidence that funding, contracting and policy arrangements are now more responsive to the needs of Kaupapa Māori partners and, in turn, whānau.



ISR represents good value for money

When applied to the high volumes of ISR referrals, and with a 5-year horizon, the cost benefit analysis found the avoided social cost of family violence to be 3.2 times the investment. If the effects of ISR on family violence persist for 10 years instead of 5 years, the benefit cost ratio increases to 5.2.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- Improved implementation in rural areas
- Improved responses for children and youth
- Greater efficiencies in managing the increasing volumes of referrals
- Improved communication to keep everyone updated on ongoing ISR developments
- Opportunities for the families and whānau engaged with agencies not affiliated with ISR to be better supported through ISR
- Development of IT-based solutions that would improve specific functions and reduce workload pressures.

NEXT STEPS

The Joint Venture Business Unit and Joint Venture agencies will be using these findings to inform the development of safe, consistent and effective responses to family violence in every community.