

Aide-mémoire

Family Violence and Sexual Violence Ministerial Advisory Group: Post-Approval Update and Supporting Media Materials

Date	18 May 2026	Ref	2026/132667
To	Hon Karen Chhour, Minister for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence		
From	Cam Sherley, Acting Chief Executive, Ph: 9(2)(a)		
Appendices	Appendix 1: Draft Letter of Appointment Appendix 2: Biographies Appendix 3: Key points for media statement Appendix 4: Q&A Appendix 5: Terms of reference for the Family Violence and Sexual Violence Ministerial Advisory Group		

Purpose

1. Following approval by the Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee on 12 May 2026, this paper provides further information on the Family Violence and Sexual Violence Ministerial Advisory Group, including next steps and an outline of the first meeting, and materials to support a media release.

Background

2. On 24 October 2025, Cabinet endorsed your proposal to establish a new advisory group for up to eight members [refer CAB-25-MIN-0378 and SOU-25-MIN-0147]. The Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention (the Centre) received 86 expressions of interest between 10 November 2025 and 16 January 2026.
3. You shortlisted 19 candidates for interview (ref 2026/129159 and 2026/130068), and the independent interview panel made 10 recommendations for you to consider (ref 2026/124933). Seven candidates were considered by the Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee, and six of these have been approved for appointment [APH-26-MIN-0086 refers].

Ministerial Advisory Group

4. This group will provide you with high-quality, independent advice that will include policy, strategy and legislative responses to family violence and sexual violence. Advice will inform Ministerial decision-making and help build systems that support prevention, elimination, response and healing.
5. The confirmed members are:
 - Debbs Murray, Founder of Eclipse Family Violence Services (Chair)
 - Matt Brown, Co-founder of anti-violence network “She is Not Your Rehab”
 - Tony Chamberlain, Pou Whakahaere of Tautoko Tāne Aotearoa
 - Caroline Herewini, Kaiwhakahare of Te Whare Taika Wāhine Refuge Charitable Trust
 - Trish McMurtrie, Manager of West Coast Women’s Refuge
 - Chrystal Walker, Community Practice Leader at Family Focus Rotorua
6. Members have been appointed for a term of two years from 20 May 2026 to 19 May 2028.
7. Secretariat support will be provided by the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention (the Centre).

Next steps

8. Following Cabinet’s approval of the appointments, letters of appointment should be sent to successful appointees from you/your office. A draft letter is enclosed for consideration in Appendix 1. Once finalised, we will provide you with individual letters to sign and send to appointees.
9. The Centre will then contact appointees to complete administrative processes, and to confirm travel arrangements for the first meeting. The Centre will also contact unsuccessful candidates to inform them of the outcome.
10. The advisory group’s term commences on 20 May 2026, and you may wish to issue a press release at this time. Materials to support this are enclosed in appendices 2-5.
11. The proposed next steps for appointments and meetings are:

Milestone	Date
Cabinet confirms APH’s decision	18 May 2026
Minister’s Office to send letters of appointment to successful appointees	19 May 2026
Advisory group announced	20 May 2026 (TBC)
Terms of appointment officially start	20 May 2026
Advisory group meets for first time	27-28 May 2026

Table 1 Next steps for the Ministerial Advisory Group

12. We will also work with your office to schedule a pre-meet with the Chair, Debbs Murray, ahead of the first meeting.

First meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Group, 27-28 May 2026

13. The inaugural meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Group is scheduled to be held at the Ministry of Justice National Office in Wellington on 27-28 May 2026.
14. The meeting is scheduled for 1.5 days, and a draft outline is enclosed below (Table 2). The first day will be an induction and introductory session, while the second day will be a focussed discussion on the next phase of the Action Plan, reflecting your priority for the group.

Day 1, Wednesday 27 May 2026

- Opening, welcome, and introductions.
- Induction session on the role of the group and terms of reference, and key guidance.
- Introductory sessions with Andrew Kibblewhite, Chair of the Executive Board, and Cam Sherley, Acting Chief Executive of the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention.
- Group discussion on their vision for priorities and opportunities for FVSV.
- Scheduled meeting with you at Parliament (3:30-4:30pm), for an opportunity to meet the members, set expectations, and discuss your priorities.
- Reflections and close.

Day 2, Thursday 28 May 2026

- Focussed sessions on the next phase of the Action Plan, including context setting, progressing the three current focus areas, and the focus areas being elevated.

Table 2 Draft outline of the first Ministerial Advisory Group Meeting, 27-28 May 2026

15. A summary of this first meeting will be provided to you following the meeting.
16. We will also explore with you and the Chair whether an additional meeting may be required in June or July 2026.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Letter of Appointment

Appendix 2: Biographies

Appendix 3: Key points for media statement

Appendix 4: Q&A

Appendix 5: Terms of reference for the Family Violence and Sexual Violence Ministerial Advisory Group

Appendix 1: Draft Letter of Appointment

Ref: 2026/ 132582 (A-F)

Name
email@address.co.nz

Dear Name

Re: Member/Chair Appointment to the Family Violence and Sexual Violence Ministerial Advisory Group

I am pleased to confirm your appointment as Member/Chair of the Family Violence and Sexual Violence Ministerial Advisory Group. Your appointment is for a term of two years from **20 May 2026 to 19 May 2028**.

As a group, you will provide independent expertise and advice to me in my capacity as the Minister for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence. This will cover system policy, design, and priorities relating to the prevention and elimination of family violence and sexual violence in New Zealand.

The Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention will provide secretariat support to the group, and will contact you directly with further information regarding your appointment.

I look forward to meeting with you on 27 May 2026.

Yours sincerely

Hon Karen Chhour
Minister for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence

IN CONFIDENCE

Appendix 2: Biographies

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IN CONFIDENCE

Appendix 3: Key points for media statement

- A new advisory group has been appointed to provide independent advice about legislation, policy and strategic direction to the Minister for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence.
- The group will speak from lived experience, grassroots advocacy, service design, trauma-informed practice, and frontline leadership.
- This knowledge will be harnessed to build on progress to improve the system and make positive change for communities. The group can consult with others as needed.
- Addressing family violence and sexual violence requires action across government and in communities. The Ministerial Advisory Group will help inform leadership of system change to strengthen services and improve outcomes for victim-survivors, supported by the National Strategy (Te Aorerekura) and its Action Plan.
- Members of the Ministerial Advisory Group are:
 - Debbs Murray, Founder of Eclipse Family Violence Services (Chair)
 - Matt Brown, Co-founder of anti-violence network “She is Not Your Rehab”
 - Tony Chamberlain, Pou Whakahaere of Tautoko Tāne Aotearoa
 - Caroline Herewini, Kaiwhakahare of Te Whare Taika Wāhine Refuge Charitable Trust
 - Trish McMurtrie, Manager of West Coast Women’s Refuge
 - Chrystal Walker, Community Practice Leader at Family Focus Rotorua
- Members have been appointed for a term of two years from 20 May 2026 to 19 May 2028.
- The advisory group will meet for the first time on 27-28 May 2026.
- Related information:
 - Te Aorerekura is New Zealand’s 25-year strategy to eliminate family violence and sexual violence. It sets a long-term direction to prevent harm, strengthen responses, and support people to heal, delivered through shorter term action plans.
 - This work is led by the Interdepartmental Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence, supported by the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention.

Link to media release <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/family-violence-and-sexual-violence-advisory-group-announced>

Appendix 4: Q&A

The Family Violence and Sexual Violence Ministerial Advisory Group

Why is an advisory group needed?

- Family violence and sexual violence remain significant issues in New Zealand, requiring strong, independent advice to inform decisions.
- Family violence and sexual violence are complex social issues that require action across government and in communities. Specialists, victim-survivors and communities need to inform approaches to improving the system to ensure they deliver changes for people affected by violence.

What will the advisory group do?

- The group will strengthen Ministerial decision-making by providing expert, independent, and community-informed perspectives. It complements existing advice from government agencies and the wider sector.
- The advisory group will:
 - Provide advice on legislation, policy, and strategic direction.
 - Bring together lived experience, sector expertise, and insights from communities.
 - Highlight system issues, emerging risks, and opportunities for improvement.
 - Offer a long-term view on prevention, response, and elimination.
 - Operate independently, with advice informing but not directing Ministerial decisions.
 - Consult with other family violence and sexual violence specialists, victim/survivors, peak bodies, and/or other interest groups or specialist perspectives, as appropriate, to ensure a wide range of perspectives are included.
- They will do this by:
 - Drawing from the lived experiences of victim/survivors and people who have used violence.
 - Providing relevant and up-to-date advice about what is happening in communities, and what communities need the most, provide a long-term view on preventing, eliminating and safely responding to family violence and sexual violence.
 - Providing a long-term view on preventing, eliminating and safely responding to family violence and sexual violence, and advising on emerging responses to family violence and sexual violence from other jurisdictions.
 - Identifying system issues or barriers that require interagency collaboration to address in pursuit of eliminating family violence and sexual violence.
 - Providing constructive challenge and highlighting risks or unintended consequences.

Membership

Who are the members?

- I have appointed six members to the advisory group, they are:
 - Debbs Murray, Founder of Eclipse Family Violence Services (Chair)
 - Matt Brown, Co-founder of anti-violence network “She is Not Your Rehab”
 - Tony Chamberlain, Pou Whakahaere of Tautoko Tāne Aotearoa
 - Caroline Herewini, Kaiwhakahare of Te Whare Taika Wāhine Refuge Charitable Trust
 - Trish McMurtrie, Manager of West Coast Women’s Refuge
 - Chrystal Walker, Community Practice Leader at Family Focus Rotorua

How did you select these members? What are their capabilities?

- Members were selected through an open and robust process and appointed by Cabinet Committee. *(Note: Further information on the process is detailed below)*
- The appointments reflect a credible, balanced, and experienced group that will support better-informed decisions and strengthen the Government’s response to family violence and sexual violence.
- I have selected appointees that bring a mix of expertise across frontline services, advocacy, lived experience, and system leadership.
- The proposed membership provides diverse perspectives, including communities disproportionately affected by family violence and sexual violence.

Why have you selected only six members? Why isn’t *name/population group/expertise* area represented?

- The advisory group may have up to eight members. Six members have been appointed.
- The group is designed to be small and includes a range of relevant perspectives, it does not represent all areas of expertise. This is recognised, and additional input will be sought where needed.
- Two appointments have been intentionally left vacant to provide flexibility to appoint members with specialised skills or expertise, should future requirements arise.
- The advisory group may, where appropriate, consult with other family violence and sexual violence specialists, victim/survivors, peak bodies, and/or other interest groups or specialist perspectives.

Governance and Accountability

What governance and accountability is there? How is this different from the Executive Board or the Centre?

- The group is independent and confidential, with advice provided directly to me as Minister for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence.
- The Ministerial Advisory Group remains independent, and the Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence remains accountable for decision making. The advisory group does not direct public servants, make decisions or manage implementation.
- Secretariat support will be provided by the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention.
- The Centre leads the Government's work to coordinate the delivery of Action Plans, in partnership with communities.

Logistics

What will this cost? What is the value?

- The advisory group has been designed as a cost-effective way to improve decision quality, and will be funded from within existing baseline funding, with a capped operating budget of \$100,000 per year. Fees are aligned with the Cabinet Fees Framework (Chair \$825 per day; Members \$680 per day).
- It is expected that most meetings will be held online to reduce travel costs.

How often will the Ministerial Advisory Group meet?

- The first meeting is scheduled for 27-28 May 2026.
- The group will meet and report to me at least quarterly.

Appointment Process

What appointment process did you follow?

- We have followed a robust and transparent process, led by the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention. This included:
 - 86 expressions of interest received
 - 19 candidates shortlisted and interviewed
 - 10 recommended by an independent interview panel
 - 7 considered for appointment
 - 6 appointed (by Cabinet Committee)
- Members have been assessed on their skills, experience, diversity, judgement, and their ability to work effectively as a balanced, credible and effective advisory group.
- Standard probity checks have been completed, including declarations, referees, and criminal record checks. Members must declare and manage conflicts of interest.

How else can someone engage in this work?

- The group is one part of a wider engagement approach. Ongoing input from across the sector remains vital, and I am committed to ensuring there are opportunities for broader expertise to continue shaping this work.

Appendix 5: Terms of reference for the Family Violence and Sexual Violence Ministerial Advisory Group

Context

The Minister for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence ('the Minister') intends to convene a Ministerial advisory group ('the advisory group') to provide high quality, independent advice relating to family violence and sexual violence. This advice will be focused on prevention, elimination, response and healing. It will support the Government's law and order targets with respect to violent crime and youth crime.

The Minister is determined to break the cycles of family violence and sexual violence, and make sure all New Zealanders are thriving, safe and supported. This is the heart of Te Aorerekura – National Strategy (2021-2046) and the Action Plan (2025-2030).

Status

The Official Information Act 1982 applies to information produced by the advisory group.

The advisory group reports to the Minister for the Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence, and secretariat services will be provided by the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention ('the Centre').

Functions and objectives

The functions of the advisory group are to:

- provide independent expertise, oversight and advice about family violence and sexual violence legislation, policy and strategic direction, including opportunities to improve our approach and the implementation of Te Aorerekura and the Action Plan
- draw from the lived experiences of victim/survivors and people who have used violence
- represent, where possible, a range of communities that are disproportionately affected by family violence and sexual violence, and/or whose needs are overlooked by traditional responses to family violence and sexual violence¹
- provide relevant and up-to-date advice about what is happening in communities, and what communities need the most
- bring specialist expertise from a range of sectors (health, justice, education, housing, and social services)
- provide a long-term view on preventing, eliminating and safely responding to family violence and sexual violence
- constructively challenge the Government and highlight risks or unintended consequences
- advise on emerging responses to family violence and sexual violence from other jurisdictions
- identify system issues or barriers that require interagency collaboration to address in

¹ This includes but is not limited to Māori, women, male survivors, Pacific peoples, disabled people and tangata Whaikaha Māori, children and young people, older people, migrant and ethnic communities, and members of the LGBTQIA+ rainbow community.

pursuit of eliminating family violence and sexual violence.

The advisory group will meet and report to the Minister at least quarterly; meetings may be held every two months as required. Focus areas will be set by the Minister ahead of time but members may choose to provide additional advice on additional matters they consider relevant. It is expected that most meetings will be held online to reduce travel costs.

The key objective of the advisory group is to enhance Ministerial decision-making by providing free and frank advice about family violence and sexual violence.

Scope of work

The advisory group will:

- assess current national legislation, policies, strategies, and frameworks regarding family violence and sexual violence
- review the effectiveness of existing programmes, services, and interventions, and suggest areas for improvement
- provide recommendations that are based on data, evidence, and best practice
- offer advice on proposed or potential legislative or regulatory changes affecting family violence and sexual violence policy
- attend any events and/or present to other Ministers if requested by the Minister.

Membership

The advisory group will have up to eight members including the Chair or co-Chairs. They will be appointed by the Minister for terms of up to two years.

The Minister will appoint a Chair or co-Chairs who will lead every meeting. One co-Chair may act as sole Chair if the other co-Chair is not present or is unable to act (e.g. if that co-Chair has a conflict of interest).

Members must have specialist expertise and/or lived experience of family violence and/or sexual violence. Members will be chosen for their expertise, experience and professional networks. This will include consideration of the overall group dynamic, and how members can be chosen to complement each other.

Members will be remunerated in line with the Cabinet Fees Framework for Level 3, Group 4 ("all other committees and other bodies").

Any members may, in writing, submit their resignation to the Minister.

The Minister may advise, in writing, the Chair or co-Chairs, or a member that their term is to expire on such earlier date as specified.

The Minister may, from time to time, alter or reconstitute the advisory group or discharge any member of the advisory group or appoint new members to the advisory group for the purpose of decreasing or increasing membership or filling any vacancies.

Roles and responsibilities

Members are expected to:

- attend all meetings or send apologies if unable to attend
- contribute free and frank advice and make recommendations based on their expertise experience and, knowledge
- respond to Ministerial requests for advice
- review relevant documentation and provide feedback within requested deadlines
- represent diverse perspectives, including lived experiences, especially of those groups most affected by family violence and/or sexual violence
- maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive information discussed in meetings
- behave professionally and act with good faith if there are any disagreements.

The Chair or co-Chairs are expected to:

- lead meetings
- ensure the group remains focused on its purpose and objectives
- encourage a constructive and collaborative environment within the group and with
- respect to the group's engagement with the Minister
- provide a summary of key recommendations to the Minister after each meeting.

The advisory group is understood to be independent. Its advice *informs* Ministerial decision-making but does not *direct* what the Minister must decide. Members are encouraged to share their views with the group freely; there is no requirement to reach consensus nor any requirement to publicly agree with the Minister's comments or decisions. However, members must not make public comments in their capacity as a member of the advisory group. The Minister considers many sources of advice and retains sole responsibility for all decisions.

Members are required to maintain confidence regarding what is discussed in meetings. Any information shared with the public must be approved by the Minister or the Chief Executive of the Centre.

The advisory group may, where appropriate, consult with other family violence and sexual violence specialists, victim/survivors, peak bodies, and/or other interest groups or specialist perspectives.