

PRESS RELEASE: MONDAY 18 MAY 2026

POLICE NOT ALWAYS RESPONDING TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- **Protection orders granted by courts are not being served in a timely manner**
- **Police are not consistently responding to family violence call outs**
- **Delays in investigations are prolonging trauma for sexual violence survivors**

Frontline Aviva kaimahi report reduced police response to family violence callouts, protection order breaches, and safety concerns. Anecdotally, many whai ora (clients) report that police are not attending family violence incidents. As a result, victim/survivors are experiencing growing fear, mistrust, and reluctance to report harm.

'Protection Orders, which used to be served immediately, are often not served for well over a week, which further reduces people's safety. One client was even told to stop calling 105 because she was "taking up too much time," despite active breaches of her Protection Order continuing.' – Gwenda Kendrew, General Manager, Clinical Services.

There is a knock-on effect from initial delays or inaction; having a record of events from Police call outs is used as evidence to support protection order applications, Oranga Tamariki investigations and other legal processes. More alarming is how it has changed the safety planning kaimahi (support staff) undertake with clients.

'Safety planning has changed from "get to a safe place to call Police" to "Police may take a long time to show up, if at all, so how can you keep safe in the meantime?"' – Kendrew

Police resources also impact sexual violence survivors. Initial crisis responses (medical assessment and victim/survivor interview) are timely. However, following these first steps, it can take a year for the case to even be allocated to an investigator. Then the investigation typically takes another year and up to 18-24 months in the court system.

'It's not unusual for survivors to wait five years from their initial report until a case concludes. That's five years of limbo, five years of being retraumatised, five years before they can start to heal. It could make it hard for them to work, show up for family, or just fully live life, as any day could be disrupted by a phone call.' - Kendrew

Delays within the police and justice systems fundamentally change how Aviva works. Aviva has never imposed a time limit on work with whai ora, working with people and whānau as long as necessary. However, such significant under-resourcing within other “cogs in the machine” inevitably has an impact. Caseloads are high and wait-lists long, as kaimahi work with the same clients for significantly longer periods.

'We cannot do our mahi without working in concert with multiple other agencies, especially NZ Police. Many do a wonderful job and care deeply about the safety of whai ora. Unfortunately shifts in government focus, without increasing in resources, have far-reaching consequences, the impacts of which could last generations.' - Kendrew

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ABOUT AVIVA

Aviva is a Canterbury-based, specialist family and sexual violence agency dedicated to making New Zealand Aotearoa violence-free. Our sexual violence services are contracted to support victims through the reporting and court process. We offer a range of services to support all people, children, youth and adults, to live free from violence and overcome its enduring harms.

CONTACT

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