

Christchurch Women's Refuge

For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

New Funding Secures Support Services for Men

Men throughout Canterbury will be supported to overcome family violence, and women and children will become safer thanks to government support of two Christchurch Women's Refuge initiatives for men.

Christchurch Women's Refuge has received two separate grants from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). MSD support will enable Christchurch Women's Refuge to sustain and expand ReachOut, the pioneering early intervention men's service it has provided in North Canterbury for the past year, whilst the DIA are funding a research project to explore temporary accommodation options for men who may be required by law or choose to leave the family home due to violent behaviour.

MSD has committed to funding the current ReachOut Family Support Worker based in North Canterbury, and also supporting another new position for three years, enabling the service to begin extension into Christchurch. ReachOut male family violence specialists make contact with men who have been named on Police Incident Reports in North Canterbury and offer individual support as well as encourage and facilitate access to family support, specialist education programmes and other agencies. Men are also referred from other agencies, such as the Probation Service, and also seek help directly through the 0800 ReachOut telephone helpline, which is how the service will operate in Christchurch. "Many of our women clients ask for help for their violent male partners" says CEO Nicola Woodward. "The funding provided by MSD will now make this possible in Christchurch."

Through its Community Internship Programme the DIA has funded a six-month secondment of Ministry of Social Development strategic planner Ashley Seaford to work with Christchurch Women's Refuge. Seaford will explore potential temporary accommodation options for men who have been required by a Police Safety Order (PSO) or Protection Order to leave the home, or who may choose to do so in order to prevent escalating violence. "We know that men often try to return to the family home in spite of a PSO or Protection Order, so we need to understand why" says Seaford. "Are they seeking to return simply to further intimidate their partner, or are they struggling to find another place to stay? Once we understand the current options available - and the gaps - we will be better able to support men towards becoming violence free and thereby also enhance the safety and wellbeing of women and children."

The ReachOut service and development of appropriate temporary accommodation options for men are both part of Christchurch Women's Refuge's strategy to develop and offer a comprehensive range of family violence intervention services for the whole family. "We know already that ReachOut and Shine safe@home (which physically secures the homes of women and children at high risk of repeat family violence) are working together to enhance safety" says Woodward. "Accommodation options for men are the next piece of the jigsaw. We really hope that this critical component of a comprehensive approach will enhance the effectiveness of PSOs and Protection Orders or, better still, encourage men to step away in order to prevent violence from escalating further. By developing these new services alongside our traditional services for women and children we can help build a

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more cohesive and integrated family violence service for families; one that is founded on the belief that everyone can overcome family violence, if offered the right support, at the right time, in the right way. ”

ReachOut commenced in April 2012 with support from the Ministry of Social Development and philanthropic funders including the Tindall Foundation, the Todd Foundation and the Hugh Green Foundation. “We are really so grateful to these funders” say Woodward. “They saw something new which had the potential to improve lives and they invested in it and that trust has paid off.”

For any concerns related to family violence, please call ReachOut on 0800 REACH OUT (0800 73224 688) or Christchurch Women's Refuge on 0800 1 REFUGE (0800 1 733 843). In an emergency always call 111.

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About Christchurch Women's Refuge

- Christchurch Women's Refuge exists to support New Zealand families – children, women and men - become their best, free from family violence.
- Christchurch Women's Refuge is an independent, local charity and is the first refuge to be established in New Zealand (1973)
- This year Christchurch Women's Refuge celebrates 40 years of service to the Canterbury community.

Christchurch Women's Refuge Services:

- Free Support & Information Lines for those living with family violence
- Proactive follow-up with women named on Police Incident Reports as living with family violence, and men named as perpetrators (North Canterbury)
- Family safety planning
- Access to free Ministry of Justice approved education programmes for women, children and men
- Community based support and advocacy for women, men and children living with family violence
- ReachOut crisis intervention service for men
- Shine safe@home service, including home security improvements to enable women and children to stay safely in their own homes (since September 2012)
- Access to residential Safe House for women and children
- Specialist Peer Support from women and men who have overcome family violence for those on the same journey. This is a new service in the New Zealand family violence sector. The first training programme will take place in mid-2013
- Community Development, including specialist family violence training; capacity building of other agencies; and raising public awareness of family violence and its effects.