



Child Law and Protection

Protecting our children is aligned to our Let the Children Live initiative. We need to do all we can to keep our children safe. Compliance with Police Vetting is necessary and applies to anyone working with children.



Ruby Manukia-Schaumkel,
Legal Advisor MCNZ.

What to do if you suspect a child is being abused?

Any abuse of a child is a serious matter. If you suspect a child is being abused it is important that you notify your local police or Oranga Tamariki-Ministry for Children. The roles and responsibility of police and Oranga Tamariki-Ministry for Children are governed by a shared Child Protection Protocol and Memorandum of Understanding.

Child abuse is dealt with by specialist police officers who work alongside Oranga Tamariki-Ministry for Children to investigate concerns. Any concerns about child abuse must be notified early so that an assessment of the child's safety can be made. Early intervention by child protection services reduces harm to victims before the abuse has the opportunity to escalate.

Many people have well-founded suspicions that a child may be suffering abuse and fail to act due to concerns that their suspicions may be wrong. Section 16 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act (1989) protects people who notify concerns of abuse in good faith from civil and criminal proceedings. Police and Oranga Tamariki-Ministry for

Children would rather know about your suspicions and be able to make their own assessment of the child's safety than not to hear at all. It is the child's safety that is paramount.

Recognising abuse and neglect

Abuse is harming a child:

- physically (e.g., giving them hidings)

- emotionally (e.g., yelling or swearing at them, shaming or rejecting them)
- sexually (eg, involving them in sexual activities)

Neglect is failing to meet a child's physical and emotional needs:

- not giving them the care, supervision, love and attention they need to grow up safely and happily (e.g., failure to provide food, warm clothing or health care).

Emotional abuse and neglect can cause serious and long-term damage.

When should we be worried?

The early stages of abuse and neglect can be hard to pick up, but over time small things can develop into serious concerns. Listed below are different situations that can lead to problems, or be early signs of things going wrong. They are only examples - there may be other signs that a child needs help.

Parents might need extra support.

Some things make life extra hard for parents, and sometimes that can lead to problems for the kids:

- money problems, being out of work
- overcrowding or housing struggles
- parents seem over-stressed

- child with special needs
- isolated from friends, family and whānau
- parents fighting and yelling
- history of depression or other mental illness
- parents separating

Early help can stop things getting worse down the track. Keep an eye on the situation and offer help and support where you can. Early signs of abuse and neglect include problems that need to be checked out:

- parent has a drug, alcohol or gambling problem
- parent does not engage with their child or has a difficult relationship with them
- child doesn't have enough clothes on and is often cold and hungry
- child has unexplained or changeable emotions (eg, withdrawn or depressed)
- parents frequently yell at, swear at or shame a child
- child seems scared of a particular adult

Talk to others you trust about your concerns and what you can do to help.

Serious signs of abuse and neglect include:

- child tells someone they have been abused (eg, have been hit, touched or are frightened)
- young child home alone or unsupervised near roads or water
- child threatened with hidings and/or regularly hit by an adult
- child exposed to violence between adults in the house
- baby/toddler left unsupervised in cot or car seat for long periods of time

- baby/child with unexplained or untreated injuries
- child exhibits seriously inappropriate behaviour
- a pattern of injuries that the child is not willing to talk about
- child appears distressed or depressed without obvious reasons
- child seems afraid of their parents or caregivers
- child draws dark drawings or has dark thoughts

You need to take urgent action by contacting Oranga Tamariki- Ministry for Children on 0508 326 459 or the police on 111. If you are concerned that your safety may be put at risk by reporting and wish to remain anonymous, phone Crimestoppers NZ on 0800 555 111.

What you can do if you feel unsafe at home?

If you are unsafe or feel unsafe, you should call the Police on 111 and/or a trusted adult that you feel safe talking to. You can also call OT on 0508 FAMILY (326459), but they may take you to a foster home or another home. You will have little control over where you will live once OT gets involved, but they must provide you with a safe environment.

You can also call helplines like YouthLine on 0800 37 66 33 or

What's Up on 0800 WHATSUP (0800 9428787).

If in doubt, trust your instincts. Don't wait, ACT. It is our collective responsibility to protect our children and ensure they are safe.

Other useful contact details:

Email: contact@ot.govt.nz
Are You OK? 0800 456 450
Parent Help 0800 568 856

METHODIST ALLIANCE

Caring for our Aging People

Michael Herman, Fundraising & Communications Manager, Christchurch Methodist Mission

New Zealanders are enjoying longer lives than any generation before, but disability or lack of mobility are increasingly common experiences for those reaching an older age.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) says that by 2026, some 19 percent of the population will be aged 65 or over, compared to 15 percent in 2016, with eight percent 75 or over and two percent aged 85 or more. Cath Swain, the Care Service Manager at WesleyCare, says this change in demography poses particular problems for care homes which are managing both very elderly and frail residents, as well as residents with challenging health conditions. WesleyCare is the Christchurch Methodist Mission's aged-care residence and hospital.

"As increasing numbers of residents arrive at care facilities later in life and with more debilitating conditions than ever before, specialised equipment is needed more than ever," says Cath. "This trend looks as if it will only increase."

Health issues increase with age

Certain health conditions prevail by age. The Ministry reports that of people aged 65 to 74, about 38 percent are obese. Nearly a third of people aged 65 to 74 are in chronic pain, rising to 36 percent in those 75 and over. And arthritis inhibits the ability of 44 percent aged 65 to 74, rising to 53 percent for those aged 75 and over.

A Victoria University of Wellington study released in October said the MOH needs to "urgently" review the national and regional capacity of aged-care facilities to

care for older adults with extreme obesity and develop comprehensive standards and infrastructure specifications for bariatric care.

Specialised equipment for lifting residents is now a requirement of modern care facilities in order to improve the care and dignity of residents as well as to prevent injury to carers. WesleyCare has been investing heavily in overhead bed hoists and aims to install these systems across the 108-bed facility.

WesleyCare is also purchasing other costly equipment for looking after residents such as electric beds, shower commodes, pressure care mattresses, mobile recliner chairs, and slings for lifting.

Equipment aids residents and staff

One of the leading causes of injuries in aged care is moving and handling residents, according to ACC, which says proper equipment is required to safely move residents, together with risk assessments, the use of correct techniques, staff training, and appropriate facility design. Cath emphasises that the proper use of equipment is essential for the safety of residents and carers alike, and improves the overall quality of care. "Moving and handling residents carefully is one of the main tasks in facilities such as WesleyCare. We want to do so knowing the resident is comfortable and safe. Our carers need the assurance they won't be injured when moving residents, which they may do eight or more times a shift."

The benefits of overhead hoists extend beyond improved resident care. Overhead systems mean a hoist is always available and ready for use, reducing the time needed for care staff to locate a mobile hoist and set it up in a different location. Cath says overhead systems provide additional benefits beyond improved efficiency. "This type of equipment can facilitate rehabilitation and preserve the dignity of residents and can reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis, chest infections, urinary tract infections, pressure ulcers, skin tears, and falls," she says.

Excellence in care

The Christchurch Methodist Mission embodies the spirit of Easter in its work with the vulnerable: compassion and unconditional care and concern are basic tenets of the work of the organisation, while WesleyCare's focus on the needs of residents has helped it maintain an enviable reputation as a provider of excellent care.

Specialised equipment is expensive and not funded by Government, with the cost of providing it falling entirely on WesleyCare and supporters like The Manchester Unity Welfare Trust Board.

Unexpected costs incurred since the emergence of Covid-19 and related pandemic plan requirements have set back WesleyCare's efforts to install hoists in more rooms. The Christchurch Methodist Mission is now raising funds to urgently expand the number of rooms with hoists available to residents. If you would like to donate, please visit our website: www.mmsi.org.nz/donate, selecting "Bed hoists for WesleyCare".



If your parish is engaged in community or social service work, you should join the Methodist Alliance.

The Alliance supports the work of its members by leveraging collective skills and experience, providing resources and information, and raising the profile of the work you do.

If you would like to join the Alliance please contact the National Coordinator Carol Barron:

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