

**Evaluation of  
Victim Support's  
Full-time Homicide Caseworker Support Service**

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## **Disclaimer**

*The view(s) obtained from NZ Police employees for this research do not necessarily reflect the organisational view(s), positions, or strategies of NZ Police, and are those of the individual contributors only.*

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## Executive summary

Victim Support has piloted the fulltime homicide caseworker service since January 2014. The service aims to provide intensive support to families of victims of homicide.

The pilot operates in Auckland, Counties Manukau and Christchurch where services are provided by three fulltime Family Support Workers (FSWs). In other areas, homicide support services are delivered through a network of specially trained volunteers.

This evaluation was commissioned to support decision making on the future of the service. The evaluation explains how the pilot operates, examines the effect on service users, and highlights implications of the continuation, future improvement and/or expansion of the service. The evaluation drew on a review of relevant documents, interviews with 30 service users, interviews with 42 stakeholders (including Police, Court Victim Advisors, Crown prosecutors, counsellors, and Victim Support staff), and the analysis of case management data.

### Findings

The pilot of the fulltime homicide caseworker support service has demonstrated the delivery of a high quality service to homicide victims' families at a traumatic time in their lives. The feedback on the service from both family members and stakeholders who participated in this evaluation has been overwhelmingly positive.

The service has met family members' needs for information, emotional support and practical assistance. As well as advocating with Police and other services on their behalf, the service has provided families with a consistent relationship with a competent and caring person who guided them throughout the complex criminal justice process. In following the criminal justice system pathway, the FSWs have reflected best practice as documented in the Homicide Service Best Practice Guideline.

Evaluation participants reported that the FSWs were caring, professional, accessible, able to build rapport, and competent. FSWs were also reported to be culturally responsive in working with families of a range of ethnicities. The qualities of the four FSWs who have been appointed to the role were seen as 'a perfect fit'.

Māori family and whānau participants spoke positively about the services they received from the FSWs. The emotional, practical and financial support was greatly appreciated and eased the pressure at a highly charged time. The Māori participants stated that their cultural needs were met.

The Pacific interviewees expressed that the service provided was appropriate, tailored to their needs, practical and useful. The interviewees felt no need for specific cultural support - possibly because they had such a high level of support from their FSWs. A deep appreciation and sense of gratitude were also consistently mentioned in interviews.

A strength of the service was the provision of a single and consistent point of contact to family members throughout the time their case was in the system. Some described this as a 'wrap around service' linking relevant services together for the benefit of the family

members. This helped families engage with the multiple services they needed to engage with, and the FSW became a familiar and reassuring face through a complex and difficult time.

A further strength was the specialised nature of the service. Police and Court Victim Advisors acknowledged the FSWs' expertise in meeting families' needs, particularly in dealing with the emotional and traumatic effects of homicide and knowing what practical assistance was available.

Stakeholders and family members who had experienced the service prior to the pilot saw the FSW service as a significant improvement in the service provided by Victim Support to homicide victims' families. The full-time service was seen as more consistent, flexible, professional, intense and proactive than the service that had been provided before by volunteers.

The service has been shown to have positive impacts on families who were found to be confident in their understanding of a complex criminal justice process. This empowered them to participate at points at which they were entitled to, such as making submissions on bail, submitting a Victim Impact Statement, attending restorative justice meetings and making submissions to the Parole Board. In particular, the support of the FSW in preparing the Victim Impact Statement was seen to have therapeutic benefits for individuals and families. In the longer term, the support of the FSW helped to strengthen families in their journey to recovery.

Police, Crown prosecutors and Court Victim Advisors found that the FSW role had positive impacts on their work. Previously Police and Crown prosecutors had been aware that within their roles they were unable to inform and advise homicide victims' families' in as much depth as the families would have liked. They and Court Victim Advisors were also aware of families' unmet needs for emotional and practical support. Having these needs met by the FSW freed them to focus on their core roles while at the same time collaborate with the FSW to fulfil their obligations to homicide victims' families. Overall, the FSW role enabled a more cohesive service to homicide victims' families.

There was overwhelming support for continuation and expansion of the service. Strategic stakeholders identified a need for thorough planning should the service be expanded.

The evaluators have suggested the service be further developed in the following areas.

- a) Because the Auckland and Counties Manukau FSWs' workloads were frequently at capacity, some eligible family members in the Auckland region were offered an alternative service. This will have resulted in inequity of provision for families within those areas. It is suggested therefore that the resourcing within the Auckland region be reviewed.
- b) Two main areas were seen as needing further development for FSWs working with family and whānau who experience different Māori life realities. Given a possible expansion of the service and the consequent uptake of services by a wider range of Māori family and whānau groups, how Family Support workers meet the diverse



needs of larger family and whānau groups will need careful attention. It is suggested that the FSWs establish working relationships with Māori support organisations within their communities with the aim of obtaining support, guidance and direction with their service provision to Māori family and whānau groups.

- c) The close relationships developed by the FSWs with family members were highly beneficial and a strength of the service. It is important therefore to manage any transitions in those relationships carefully. Ways of reducing a family's sense of loss and ensuring continuity of care need to be planned well in advance of an FSW's pending departure.
- d) Because the service is a pilot, decisions about the resourcing that might be required for the FSW role, such as work space, transport provision and remuneration, were based on the best assessment at the time. Now that there are some clear learnings from the pilot, it is suggested that these aspects of the resourcing of the role be reviewed and adjusted.
- e) Should the service be expanded it is suggested that work is done to ensure the data recorded in the VIVA case management system is suitable for output monitoring.

## **Conclusion**

The pilot has demonstrated the provision of a high quality and much needed service that is worthy of expansion to other areas of the country. Because of the service, family members of homicide victims were seen to be empowered and strengthened in their journey to recovery. The service has also given homicide victims' families a sense of being treated with respect and dignity within the criminal justice system.

# 1 The Fulltime Homicide Caseworker Support Service

The fulltime homicide caseworker service was established by the Ministry of Justice and has been provided by Victim Support in three districts since January 2014. It aims to provide an intensive support service to families of victims of homicide.

The pilot operates in Auckland, Counties Manukau and Christchurch. In other areas, homicide support services are delivered through a network of specially trained volunteers who are managed by paid Service Co-ordinators. The three locations were selected based on demographic factors:

- Auckland - transient population, ethnically diverse, mid-range socio-economic level
- Counties Manukau - high Māori and Pasifika population, low socio-economic level
- Christchurch - smaller population, mid-range socio-economic level.

Services are provided by three fulltime Family Support Workers (FSWs), employed by Victim Support on short term contracts. Oversight and support is provided by three Homicide Service Specialists (who also co-ordinate services delivered by volunteer homicide support workers). Fulltime FSWs and volunteer homicide support workers are sometimes involved in the same case at the same time, supporting different family members.

## **The context of the Fulltime Homicide Caseworker Support Service**

Victim Support is an independent incorporated society contracted to government to provide support services to victims of crime, with annual base funding of approximately \$6 million. The organisation also administers financial assistance to victims of serious crime. Governance is provided by a board consisting of representatives of 33 local group committees including two Māori representatives from the local group committees.

Family members of homicide victims have long been recognised as having the greatest need for victim support services, which have been offered in New Zealand over a number of decades. From 2010, Victim Support established the Enhanced Homicide Service funded by an appropriation from the Offender Levy funds. Specialist volunteer support workers managed by Service Co-ordinators were recruited and trained to work with families affected by homicide. Four experienced Homicide Service Specialists were appointed to cover four regions of the country. Their current role is to supervise, debrief and offer advice and direction to the Service Co-ordinators and Family Support Workers in their management of cases, to provide quality assurance for service delivery, and to facilitate on-going learning. The service has been guided by international research, a victim reference group including homicide victims' families, and annual interviews with a small number of homicide victims families.

The Enhanced Homicide Service further developed a best practice guideline which had been used in earlier years. This document explains the nature of and reactions to homicide, outlines the service pathway, guides work with other agencies, and outlines the funding

available through Victim Assistance Schemes, The Homicide Support Service and the Victim Support training unit review the best practice guideline annually (Victim Support, 2014).

The Homicide Service has developed a range of relevant information in pamphlet form for use in interactions with family members. This includes information about the service and what to expect, facing grief and loss and answering a child's questions, the financial assistance available, the criminal justice process, the coronial system, and coping with media attention. The service also has a quarterly newsletter for families of homicide victims, with information on topics such as different counselling therapies, supporting children dealing with grief, as well as first-hand accounts from families on topics such as dealing with the media.

### **Why the pilot service was established**

The pilot was established in response to feedback to Victim Support and the Ministry of Justice that the volunteer-based service was not delivering the kind of intensive support service required by the families of victims of homicide. As a result of follow-up visits to service recipients, analysis of complaints, and feedback from lobby groups, Victim Support recognised that a number of factors impacted on the quality of service offered by volunteers. In terms of meeting the needs of homicide victims' families, volunteers had:

- A limited time commitment
- Difficulties in providing continuity of service
- Limited contractual obligations so that it was more difficult to impose expectations
- In some cases limited knowledge of the criminal justice process or the financial assistance available to families of homicide victims
- A lack of status in liaising with Police
- Limited ability to provide support face to face
- Fewer family members who engaged with the service offered. (Victim Support, 2012b)

A fulltime caseworker model was expected to deliver better service to and outcomes for victims' families. A fulltime caseworker could provide a more intensive and consistent service, would have more status with other agencies and would be subject to more formal performance management. (Victim Support, 2013)

The fulltime homicide caseworker service aligns well with Victim Support's strategic direction. The strategic plan for 2016 - 2020 is expected to emphasise the continuing improvement of service quality and best practice standards as well as the building of capacity and capability. The homicide support service incorporates the model of service delivery, Te Whare Tapa Whā<sup>1</sup>, being implemented throughout the organisation (Victim

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<sup>1</sup> The symbol of the whareniui illustrates the four dimensions of Māori well-being: Taha tinana (physical well-being); Taha wairua (spiritual well-being); Taha whānau (family well being); Taha hinengaro (psychological well being).

Support, 2014). The Chief Executive sees the pilot as deepening or intensifying the service provided to families of homicide victims.

The pilot also aligns well with the strategic direction of the Victims Centre at the Ministry of Justice. In line with international trends, NZ is moving from providing broad-based standard services to all victims to a more tailored, targeted approach where those in the greatest need receive the greatest level of service and attention. Families of homicide victims are recognised as having the greatest need, and as incurring the greatest social and economic costs as a result of their victimisation.

### **How the fulltime homicide caseworker service is organised**

Victim Support was seen as the most suitable organisation to provide the fulltime homicide caseworker service. As well as having experience of running a homicide support service, Victim Support had the necessary infrastructure, were already employing specialists in homicide support, and had a case management system.

#### **The fulltime caseworker role**

An outline of the caseworker, (Family Support Worker) role states (in summary):

Case workers will ensure that the primary victim family<sup>2</sup> receives comprehensive end-to-end support, information, financial assistance and liaison from the time of the Incident to parole and beyond through:

- Being a clear, named, consistent, proactive single point of contact for a family at all stages of their journey dealing with the homicide from investigation to parole
- Ensuring that victim grants are delivered as simply and unobtrusively as possible
- Having the overall responsibility to ensure that the family is receiving the best and most comprehensive support and communications from agencies involved
- Liaison and co-ordination with all agencies/workers involved
- Using description of the end-to-end service/needs of families as a check-list to ensure that at all stages comprehensive and proactive support is in place for every member of the family
- Advocating on behalf of the family with all agencies/workers involved
- Having an in-depth knowledge of the needs of families dealing with a homicide, services available and the process and rules of all criminal justice systems
- At any time during the process, the Case Worker will be able to ascertain what has and has not been discussed with the primary victim family, what agencies they have been in touch and/or met with, and understand the relevant next steps in the criminal justice process for the family. (Victim Support, date unknown)

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<sup>2</sup> “The definition of ‘primary family’ is complex and depends on context. It often includes people living in different parts of the country, and sometimes involves people who are in dispute with each other.”

## **Management of the Family Support Workers**

The three Family Support Workers (FSWs) are managed by the Homicide Service Specialist (HSS) for their area. The HSS provide line management as well as coaching and mentoring to the Family Support Workers, who also have independent supervision from qualified supervisors. The HSS roles continue to have oversight of every homicide in their region and to co-ordinate the service to family members.

## **The FSW within the Homicide Support Service**

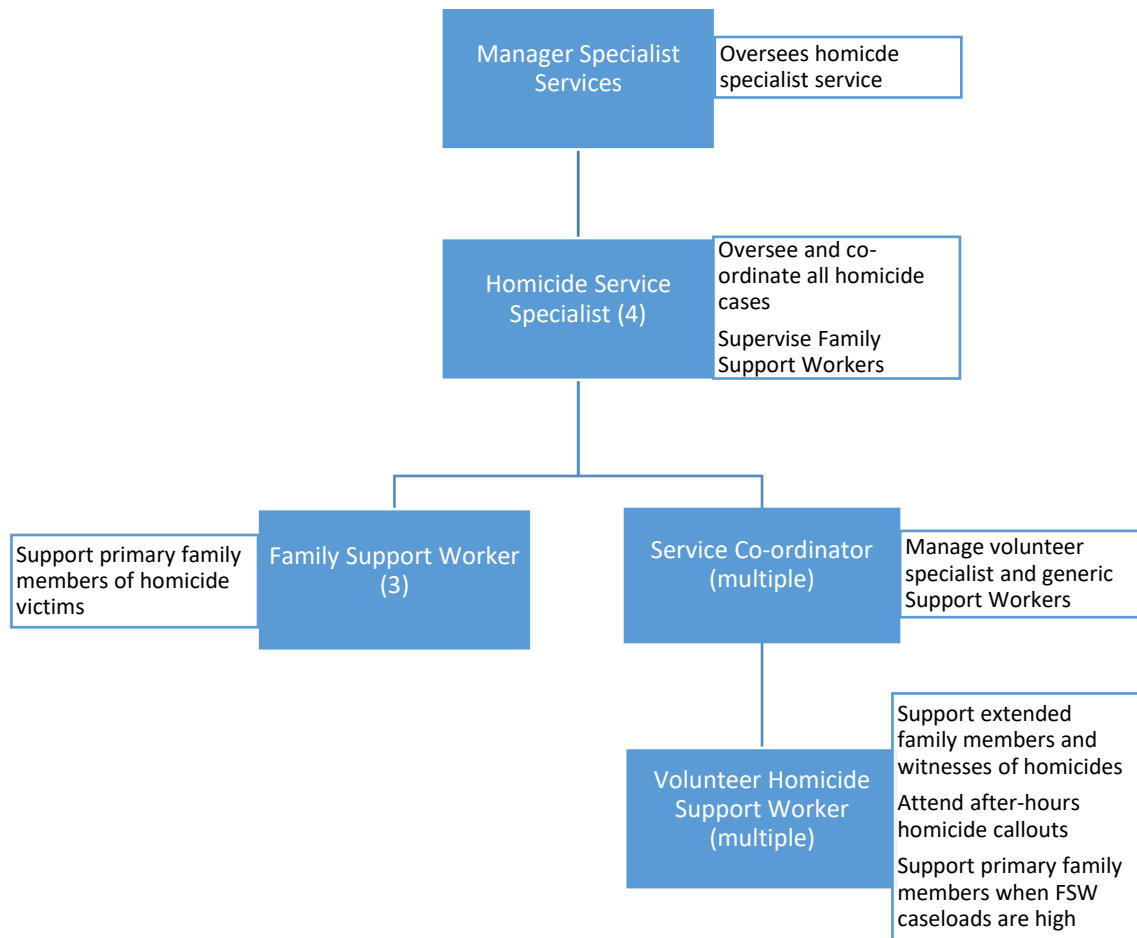
FSWs and volunteer homicide support workers sometimes work together. The FSW works a 40 hour week with flexible hours so that time off in lieu is taken when weekend or evening work is required. Volunteer homicide support workers continue to be on roster overnight and may attend the initial callout following a homicide. FSWs support the immediate family of the deceased, while volunteer homicide support workers may work with extended family members and witnesses. Volunteer homicide support workers continue to be primarily responsible for some immediate family members when the FSW's caseload becomes too heavy.

HSSs co-ordinate with the Service Co-ordinators who directly manage the volunteer service in each area. As part of the transition to the new FSW service, volunteer homicide support workers continued to work with some family members where there were established relationships, while the FSWs engaged with new cases. Other cases were taken over from the volunteer homicide support workers.

Soon after a homicide the HSS for the region where the homicide occurred arranges a teleconference to co-ordinate which branches and roles in the Victim Support Service will work with identified family members. FSWs, Service Co-ordinators and volunteer homicide support workers from several areas may all participate in the teleconference.

Figure 1 below summarises the structure of Victim Support's Homicide Support Service following the introduction of the pilot.

**Figure 1: The Structure of Victim Support’s Homicide Support Service during the pilot**



### Recruitment and training of FSWs

The three Family Support Workers were recruited through public advertising and selected by an interview panel including an HSS, the Victim Support senior manager for service delivery, and a representative of the New Zealand Police Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB).

Family Support Workers received two weeks’ training in Wellington and on-the-job training. The first Family Support Worker for Auckland resigned from the role for personal reasons after 10 months and a new Family Support Worker was appointed soon after. In Christchurch and Counties Manukau the FSWs have been in the position throughout the length of the pilot.

### Performance reporting

Victim Support is accountable to the Ministry of Justice for its services to victims of crime and provides a quarterly report on outputs and outcomes. Reporting on the outputs of services such as the Homicide Support Service is included.

## **The learning from NZ and international research**

### **The needs of families of homicide victims**

A number of researchers in the UK, USA and New Zealand have sought to identify the needs of families of homicide victims. (e.g. Paterson et al, 2006; Malone, 2007; Casey, 2011; Kingi et al, 2011; Metzger et al, 2015). These studies provide useful context when considering the extent to which specific services may be meeting identified needs.

Metzger's review of this literature refers to families of homicide victims experiencing 'traumatic bereavement'. Their lengthy and sometime frustrating involvement with the criminal justice system increases their emotional difficulties and compounds the grieving process. As well as dealing with the emotional and psychological effects of their bereavement by homicide, families need help with practical and domestic issues, advocacy, help with dealing with the justice system, and help in dealing with police. (Metzger et al, 2015)

In New Zealand, Victim Support commissioned a study in 2011. In summary, it found that:

- No one agency or service can meet the needs of the families of homicide victims. Interagency responses need to be developed
- It is important that those who work with families of homicide victims are experienced and have had specialised training
- Families require timely and appropriate sources of information and support
- Support groups where families can share their experiences are important in facilitating pathways to recovery and healing
- The provision of information to help families negotiate the criminal justice system is important.
- There is a need for more 'user friendly court systems and environments for those giving evidence and families of homicide victims
- It is important to consider the needs of children who have lost a parent to homicide and to provide support and assistance to caregivers

(Kingi et al, 2011 pp x and xi)

### **Evaluations of support services for families of homicide victims**

Two evaluations of support services for families of homicide victims have been identified, one of a service in the Netherlands (Van Wijk et al, 2012) and the other of a service provided by Victim Support in England and Wales (Turley and Tompkins, 2012). The evaluations are useful for identifying the similarities and differences between the overseas services and the NZ fulltime homicide caseworker service, the effectiveness of the services, and what lessons can be taken from the overseas experience.

#### ***Victim Assistance Netherlands***

Following dissatisfaction with a generic approach to victim support, Victim Assistance Netherlands started a new service for surviving relatives of homicide victims in 2007.

Professional paid case managers (referred to as the Case Manager Murder and Manslaughter) were appointed to offer practical assistance, support surviving relatives during investigation and criminal proceedings, arrange legal assistance, offer counselling for coping with trauma and loss, and liaise with the criminal justice system, employers and social security authorities. The assistance was to continue until 'a few months after the sentence has become irrevocable'. Other than this defined point of case closure, the features of the service are very similar to the fulltime homicide caseworker service being piloted in New Zealand.

The service began as a pilot and was gradually implemented nationwide. Evaluators (Van Wijk et al, 2012) carried out a longitudinal study, following a group of surviving relatives for up to three years after the crime. The families were found to have received psychological, emotional, physical (health), social, practical, and criminal justice system support and reported a high level of satisfaction with the service. While many had the support of family and friends, the families found the support of a case manager who knew what they were going through, yet was able to maintain sufficient professional distance, was valuable. They found their case managers accessible, reliable, knowledgeable and confidential. They were treated with respect and tact. Families struggled to find any areas for improvement, but did suggest:

- Case managers should contact relatives as soon after the crime as possible
- Police should be able to explain the case manager's role to the family
- Changing case managers should be avoided if possible
- Some family members would have liked more rather than less contact following the trial.

In general, surviving relatives were doing better two or three years after the crime. The research concluded that it was important to safeguard the knowledge and experience of the case managers and suggested that consideration be given to the service being available to families at the time a perpetrator was released from prison.

### ***Victim Support England and Wales***

In 2010, Victim Support in England and Wales established a new nationally consistent Homicide Service with paid professional staff. As in New Zealand, before 2010, people bereaved by homicide received support from specially trained Victim Support volunteers. The new homicide service assigned a professional case worker who acted as a single point of contact to bereaved people until the support was no longer needed. A multi-agency national implementation group was established to manage implementation and delivery and a range of measures were used to raise awareness of the service among police. Staff were supported and managed by team leaders as well as an external support service.

Referrals to the service were made by the Police Family Liaison Officer. Case workers carried out introductory meetings with the family members, assessed their needs and provided emotional and practical support, information, advocacy and financial assistance.

The findings of research (Turley and Tompkins, 2012) on the Homicide Service were:



- Service users reported that the effects of the Homicide Service on them were overwhelmingly positive. The emotional and practical support they received had improved their emotional and psychological well-being, alleviated stress and anxiety and facilitated a more positive outlook. Service users gained an enhanced understanding of the criminal justice process, a sense of confidence and a feeling of empowerment. Financial support and advocacy particularly alleviated stress. Service users valued the case worker's availability, reliability, objectivity and similarity of background to themselves.
- As a result of the service, agencies worked more collaboratively, the partnership between Victim Support and Police had improved, and Police views of Victim Support improved
- Caseworkers expressed uncertainty and confusion over the exit strategy. There was concern that service users had sometimes become overly reliant on their case worker.
- Caseloads were higher than expected and some case workers were working excessive hours. There was a need for more effective use of homicide volunteers. Maintaining continuity of support through a trial was challenging.
- Maintaining communication between the case workers, police, Victim Support's core service, and the Witness Service provided at court was challenging. There was a perceived lack of engagement by Victim Support's core service.
- It was suggested that Police review consent with service users who initially decline the service.

The implications of these evaluation findings for the NZ fulltime homicide caseworker service will be discussed in the final section of this report where they can be compared with the findings of the evaluation which is the subject of this report.

## **2 The evaluation of the Fulltime Homicide Caseworker Support Service**

The evaluation fulltime homicide caseworker service has been commissioned to support decision making on the future of the service. Because there are competing pressures on the victim services appropriation it is important that services seeking to secure the funding have good evidence of their effectiveness. An evaluation also provides Victim Support with an opportunity to demonstrate that it can work with specialist services and a mixed model combining professional paid support workers with volunteer support workers.

### **Evaluation objectives**

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Explain how the pilot operates on the ground
- Document the effect of the pilot on service users and those delivering the service
- Highlight the factors which should be taken into account when formulating recommendations about the continuation, future improvement and/or expansion of the Pilot.

### **Evaluation questions**

The evaluation will also explore the following questions:

- Is the Pilot meeting service users' needs? Are there any disparities for Maori/Pasifika in take-up or outcome?
- Has the Pilot been implemented as intended?
- Is the Pilot meeting the funder's requirements?
- Is the Pilot providing the right level of service, and are caseloads sustainable?
- How can the piloted service be improved for future delivery? How can caseworkers and homicide volunteers work best together?

### **The evaluation approach**

#### **Inception**

The evaluation commenced with inception meetings with the Ministry of Justice and Victim Support. A document review was also carried out.

#### **Interviews with service users**

Interviews were conducted during June and July 2015 with 30 service users who were family members of homicide victims. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face although two service users preferred to be interviewed by telephone. The interviews were of approximately an hour in duration.

Service users who had been engaged with the service for at least six months and who had had at least six contacts with the Family Support Worker (FSW) were selected to be

approached by the Family Support Worker who explained the research and asked whether they agreed to being contacted by a researcher. The sample list was first reviewed by the relevant FSW to ascertain whether there would be any safety or other issues that would rule out any of those on the list being approached about participation in research. With the service user's consent Victim Support forwarded the details of the service users who agreed to be contacted to the researchers. The researchers then contacted the service user by phone. In Auckland, Māori service users were contacted by a Māori researcher and Pacific service users were contacted by a Pacific researcher.

Thirty three service users agreed to be contacted by the evaluators and 28 interviews were carried out with 30 service users<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1: Location and ethnicity of service users interviewed**

Location	Auckland	Counties Manukau	Christchurch	TOTAL
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
<b>Pakeha/European</b>	4	6	4	14
<b>Māori</b>		5	4	9
<b>Pasifika</b>	2	2		4
<b>Other</b>	1	2		3
<b>TOTAL</b>	7	15	8	30

An information sheet about the evaluation was discussed with participants and they were asked to sign a consent form. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide based on the evaluation questions outlined in the evaluation framework (Ministry of Justice, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Two service users jointly participated in two of the interviews.

## Interviews with stakeholders

The following stakeholders participated in interviews:

**Table 2: Location and role of stakeholders interviewed.**

	Auckland	Counties Manukau	Christchurch	Wellington	TOTAL
Location					
Role					
Police	5	5	7		17
Crown prosecutors		2	1		3
Court Services for Victims	5		2		7
VS national managers / board	2		1	2	5
VS Family Support Workers	1	1	1		3
VS Homicide Service Specialists	1	1	1		3
MoJ Victims Centre				1	1
Counsellors	1	1	1		3
TOTAL	13	10	13	6	42

Participants were provided with an information sheet about the evaluation and a semi-structured interview schedule was used to address the evaluation questions.

## Analysis and reporting

Where agreed, interviews were audio-recorded. Transcripts or notes were analysed by coding into themes identified from the evaluation questions. Separate analyses of the themes for Māori and Pacific service users were undertaken by the Māori and Pacific evaluators in the evaluation team. Information from all sources (document review, interviews, and administrative data) was combined and synthesised to address each of the evaluation objectives and questions.

### Analysis of Victim Support administrative data

We consulted with Victim Support and the Ministry of Justice about what type of quantitative information would be useful to evaluate the Fulltime Homicide Caseworker Support Service. A number of output areas and general information that was captured statistically on the Victim Support database (VIVA) were identified. A data analysis plan was produced and

relevant data requested from the Victim Support VIVA case management reporting system. Victim Support provided us with data for a one year period from 1/7/2014 to 30/6/2015. The analysis was framed around the outputs listed in the Pilot Evaluation Framework (Ministry of Justice, 2015). We have presented the data in relevant sections of the report or in the appendices and synthesised this information with the qualitative information collected from interviews.

### **Ethics, cultural appropriateness and safety**

The evaluation was conducted according to the ethical principles and associated procedures endorsed in the Australasian Evaluation Society's Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations. The research design plan, information sheets and consent forms were reviewed by the Justice Sector Research Review Group and their comments incorporated. Approval for access to NZ Police interviewees was sought and obtained from the NZ Police Research and Evaluation Steering Committee. Further information on the approach to address ethical, cultural and safety issues in this evaluation is available on request.

### **Evaluation limitations**

- The evaluation framework developed by the Ministry of Justice did not specify a full comparative design. A comparative design where the service provided in non-pilot areas was compared to the service as piloted would have provided a stronger evaluation. Nevertheless, those stakeholders and family members who had experienced the service available prior to the pilot commencement offered comparisons and these are reported where they are made. The quantitative data extracted from the case management recording system was not found to be sufficiently robust to carry out a meaningful comparison.
- FSWs were provided with a list of service users who met the selection criteria and acted as an intermediary by approaching service users to participate in the evaluation. While this good practice for respecting the privacy of service users, there is a potential for sample selection bias.
- A sample of five Crown prosecutors was sought for interview. Only three agreed to an interview of 11 who were contacted. The main reason given for not participating was that the prosecutors did not think they had had enough experience of the service. While in depth feedback was given by the three prosecutors, additional interviews would have strengthened the findings.
- There appear to be some inconsistencies in the way data has been entered in some fields and some fields have substantial missing data in the VIVA system. Where this is the case the data is presented in the appendices with caveats.

## **The evaluation report structure**

This report follows the pathway of support provided by the service beginning with the eligibility of and engagement of service users, and following through the initial crisis response, linking with Police and the investigation, linking with other agencies and services, and support through the criminal justice process. Final sections examine service quality, including cultural responsiveness, organisational support, perceived strengths and positive impacts of the service and suggested improvements and implications for the future. The report concludes with an overall assessment of the service.

### **3 Eligibility and engagement**

#### **Service expectations**

The expectations for referral to and engagement of family members of homicide victims with the homicide caseworker service are set out in the Best Practice Guideline (Victim Support, 2014).

Referral is made to Victim Support when Police notify the homicide to the Victim Support contact centre. When the response is allocated to the FSW, they are expected to respond within 45 minutes and to attend as and where required to support the primary family members. A list provided by the Police, or constructed with information from the family, will identify further family members who may need support.

At the first contact the FSW is to carry out introductions, establish who is involved and how the service can help, and offer the service to the client. If initially, families may not see the value of having a Victim Support Worker available to them a further approach may be made at a later date.

Volunteer homicide support workers are to provide immediate support to those who have been directly exposed to the homicide (including primary family members when the immediate support is needed outside of business hours), secondary survivors including grieving relatives and friends of the victim and people from the wider community.

#### **How eligibility and engagement operated in the pilot**

Nationally, 70 homicide incidents were referred to Victim Support over the one year period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. During this period 27 homicide incidents were referred to the pilot areas. This was not the total number of homicide incidents that FSWs were working with as they were also supporting victims of homicides that occurred prior to 1 July 2014 as well as victims who lived in their area but were linked with homicides which took place in other areas.

In the three pilot areas Victim Support provided services to 704 family members of homicide victims and others (such as direct witnesses) linked to the homicides during this period. Of the 704, 414 were supported by the FSWs, and 290 were supported by volunteer homicide support workers.

**Table 3: The number of people supported by the FSWs at each pilot site from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015**

Pilot site	No. of people supported by an FSW 1/7/2014-30/6/2015
Auckland	146
Counties Manukau	151
Christchurch	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>

Of the 414 people supported, 252 (61%) were female and 159 (38%) were male<sup>4</sup>. Tables showing the ethnicity and age of some of the people supported can be found in the appendices<sup>5</sup>.

The status of the FSW cases as at 30 June 2015 showed that 192 victims were actively being supported on that date (168 active cases and 24 cases which had previously been closed and re-opened).

**Table 4: The status of FSW cases as at 30/6/2015**

Pilot site	Active	Closed	Parked	Re-opened	Total
Auckland FSW	62	95	10	4	171
Counties Manukau FSW	47	62	20	8	169
Christchurch FSW	59	96	2	12	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>477<sup>6</sup></b>

## Referral

Victim Support stakeholders acknowledged that the service was dependent on Police to refer family members who were affected by a homicide. The Board chair stated that the organisation was constantly working with the Police on referral processes for all victims that

<sup>4</sup> Three were not specified.

<sup>5</sup> Because of substantial missing data the information is not sufficiently reliable to include in the report.

<sup>6</sup> This figure differs from the total in Table 3 as it includes all cases since the inception of the pilot, as at 30/6/2015.



need the service. Police usually emailed a referral form (CSC1) to the Victim Support Contact Centre.

A close relationship between Police and the FSW facilitated Police making appropriate referrals and Homicide Service Specialists were confident this was being done well in FSW areas. A Police officer-in-charge in one area said:

*Normally someone is tasked to make the Victim Support referral and then I would usually receive a phone call from [the FSW] on the day that we kick off the investigation and then we are in contact from then on. I have had no problems with that. [Police]*

One family member had referred themselves at the time they were notified of the first parole hearing in their case.

*I had seen Victim Support in the brochure that I got from Corrections. It is in there. I thought 'oh, who is this?' "...if you needed any assistance or help...." So I rang and that is how I got to meet her.... I invited [FSW] around home here. We got talking. She introduced herself and what her role is with Victim Support [Participant 28]*

### **Identifying eligible family members**

Victim Support records the relationship of a person to the deceased as 'victim role'. Table 5 below shows that FSWs most commonly worked with siblings, parents and children of the deceased. It also shows that FSWs primarily worked with family members; however in a few cases they provided support to non-related victims (see the full table, Table 13 in the appendices). Table 5 demonstrates flexibility in the provision of support to a wide range of family members.

**Table 5: Relationship to the deceased of those supported by the FSWs and volunteer Homicide Support Workers at each pilot site from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015**

Relationship to the deceased	FSW AKL	FSW Chch	FSW CM	<sup>7</sup> Other SW	Grand Total
Spouse of Primary Victim	1	1	1	5	8
Partner of Primary Victim	5	2	5	13	25
Daughter/Son	21	12	19	26	78
Ex-partner of Primary Victim	2	1	4	2	9
Parent of Primary Victim	15	24	12	47	98
Step parent of Primary Victim	2	5		3	10
Grandparent of Primary Victim	2	3	3	8	16
Sibling/sibling-in-law	56	37	63	63	219
Aunt/Uncle	1	4	5	15	25
Cousin of Primary Victim	8	6	7	7	28
Niece/Nephew	16	5	9	9	39
Other <sup>8</sup>	17	17	23	92	149
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>704</b>

While the service was available to immediate family members, senior managers stated that this was generally interpreted as family members who had the closest relationships with the deceased. Initially the Police provided information on the next of kin and there was some on-going interaction with Police to identify other primary family members. Once the FSW engaged with the family referred, other members would be identified by family, including those who lived in other areas in the country or overseas. Occasionally Police, counsellors or Court Victim Advisors would hear of other close family members who needed the service and refer them to the FSW. Family members were appreciative that the FSW engaged directly with all members of the immediate family.

*[The FSW] could just ring [head of family] and say 'right tell the family this'. But she doesn't. She actually goes to each of the family and tells them. Which would be easier for her just to sort of say 'this is what is happening, can you tell everyone'. But she doesn't. She goes the extra mile and tells the whole lot. [Participant 6]*

## Engagement

Family Support Workers recognised that it was important that Police fully understood what the service provided so that they could explain it to family members at the time of the crisis.

<sup>7</sup> Volunteer homicide support workers

<sup>8</sup> See table 13 in the appendices for the full range of relationships.

This information was essential to help family members decide whether to agree to the referral.

One FSW usually arranged for Police to accompany her and introduce her to the family on the first visit. This was thought to give the family assurance to assist their engagement with the FSW.

Not all family members engaged immediately with the service. FSWs said that some had mixed feelings about receiving emotional support but once they realised the range of practical and particularly financial support and information available they became more responsive. One family member said:

*The beginning I didn't really open up with her. The first time after the accident happened it was small talk. But the way she treated us, like we ask her a question and she straight away participated with it and asked the Police. Gathered us the answer to satisfy us. At the beginning it was okay. We weren't as open with her as much. But after a while I was so happy.... The way she provided the service. I can say that any problem come, she sorted for us. [Participant 8]*

Others who had initially declined the service chose to re-contact the FSW once they saw the support other family members were receiving. Efforts were generally made to re-engage with families who declined the service once the funeral or tangi was concluded.

### **Reasons why the FSW may not be allocated a case**

Not all family members who were eligible received support from the FSW. The immediate family members of a few homicide victims were allocated to a volunteer homicide support worker when the FSW caseload had become full. If the family became well engaged with the volunteer, the volunteer continued as their support worker.

In Counties Manukau during the pilot period approximately two to four homicides had been allocated to a volunteer homicide support worker because the FSW caseload was full. This could involve up to 10 family members for each homicide. In Auckland the HSS estimated that the FSW supported approximately 60 per cent of family members of homicide victims, with the remaining 40 per cent being supported by volunteer homicide support workers. This had occurred because in one period there had been several homicides in a short space of time. In Christchurch all eligible family members were receiving support from the FSW.

When a referral was received out of business hours or when an FSW was on leave, a volunteer homicide support worker attended the initial call-out and explained the service available through the FSW.

### **Summary: Eligibility and engagement**

Stakeholders were confident that those eligible for the service in the pilot areas were being referred by Police. However not all eligible family members in Auckland and Counties Manukau could be offered the FSW service when caseloads were full. Families' engagement with the service could take time.

## 4 The initial crisis response

### Service expectations

The FSW is expected to provide emotional and practical support through the initial crisis. Common needs which require support include safety and security, emotional support, advocacy in relation to access to the deceased, access to the family home, accommodation, belongings, pets, medications, contact details for family/whanau members, childcare, and spiritual needs.

The FSW is expected to provide information as appropriate and deliver the homicide pack of printed information. A relationship tree<sup>9</sup> is established. All primary victims are to be offered follow-up contact the following day to arrange the next face to face meeting. Immediate needs are identified and documented. After the first follow-up visit a needs assessment is carried out using the Te Whare Tapa Whā<sup>10</sup> model.

Family members may be approached by journalists at this stage as well as at other times throughout the case. The Worker should inform family members that, while the investigation is still progressing as well as at the time of a trial, it is essential that they discuss media contact with Police first. Workers should not make media statements themselves. The Workers' role is to support the family members' decisions and honour their wishes where they fall within the guidelines.

The FSW is expected to report in before and after initial visits, debrief with the HSS and enter the support actions in the VIVA case management reporting system. (Victim Support, 2014)

### How the initial response was delivered in the pilot

#### Initial notification

Of the 27 homicides referred to Victim Support during the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, Victim Support responded within 24 hours of receiving the referral in all but two homicides. Victim Support can only respond once they have received a referral and they do not have any control over when they receive notification in relation to the date and time of the incident.

Victim Support has an on-call service which ensures either a volunteer homicide support worker or Family Support Worker is available to attend the initial notification to the family of the homicide. Both FSWs and HSSs said that it was ideal if the FSW could attend, establish a relationship with the family from the beginning and work with the family from then. Attending with Police also helped establish a relationship with Police over the case. At the time of the notification the FSW introduced themselves to family members, provided

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<sup>9</sup> A Relationship Tree is a list of the names and relationships of all family members and close associates (e.g. partners, flat mates).

<sup>10</sup> See footnote 1.

immediate support, explained that they would be there to support them from then on, and assessed immediate needs.

A Police Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) manager said that the FSW was especially helpful when families became aware of a homicide through social media and came to Police seeking information sometimes before a victim had been identified. In these cases the FSW worked with Police in giving consistent information to family members and keeping them updated.

### **First visits**

At the first visit FSWs stated that it was important to understand the immediate needs and not to bombard family members with information. Families had many questions and wanted to know what was happening with their loved one and what decisions they needed to make. It was important to give contact details and ensure families could ring at any time over the next few days. FSWs would leave a homicide pack of information to be looked at when the time was right. They would offer follow-up visits during the first few days all of which helped build rapport with the family members. This was a time of developing an understanding of family dynamics and who would be the key contact people in the family. A family member said:

*[The FSW] was great. She rung up, introduced herself, said that she was from Victim Support, asked if she could come out and have a conversation.... It was great support because the family were distraught. Nobody could actually speak to each other about what was happening. Everybody was angry; because they missed him, they loved him so much. So the hurt was pretty high. [Participant 3]*

Emotional support at this time was crucial to many families.

*And she was there, and we wouldn't have had it any other way. I think she sort of helped us get through each step.... Right from the beginning, right through to planning the funeral. We wouldn't have done it without her. We really wouldn't have done. [It] is the worst nightmare of anybody. She was right with us every single step that we made.... the day that I crashed and I rang her, she was there so fast. She said I knew this was going to happen. She was just there. [Participant 26]*

### **The deceased and the funeral**

FSWs were guided by family in relation to their needs for support in accompanying them to the morgue, liaising with a funeral director and making arrangements for the victim's body to be returned to the home. The FSW helped to explain the reasons for any delays and were at pains to ensure they obtained the right information for families.

*[Families'] main concern in the beginning is what is happening, because in a homicide the body will go to the mortuary for a post mortem. So often they will want to see their loved one. That could also be reflected around sort of cultural needs as well. So we are looking at cultural needs, spiritual needs. Often with Māori families for example they want to be with their loved one. They don't want their loved one there on their own so we will liaise*

*with Police about the family being able to go to the mortuary and stay in the whānau room so that they are close to their loved one all the time. Those early days are a real blur for them. [FSW]*

Police explained that support was particularly valuable when the primary family members were overseas and help was needed in arranging for family members to come to NZ, arranging the funeral, and transporting the deceased to the home country.

*So having someone else in the background doing all that sort of stuff, and knowing that it was being dealt with and we didn't have to worry, was brilliant.... So [the FSW] was able to help sort of smooth those things out with the family. It just made life a lot easier I think from a police perspective, and the family were well looked after as a result. There was real confidence that all the people who should know in the family were well aware and arrangements were being made that were appropriate. [Police]*

Some families did not engage with the FSW until after the funeral.

*There was family support.... we actually needed counselling sessions that time, but we did not do that because we weren't feeling that well. Well on that time we did not need anybody around us; just the family, nobody else. But after the funeral and things, then we started talking with [the FSW]. Like whatever questions we had, we asked her every time. [Participant 8]*

Attending a funeral could be an important part of engaging with family.

*[The FSW] came to the funeral – it was lovely; the two detectives were also there – quite beautiful, the respect they paid my family made me appreciate it. [Participant 16]*

### **Needs assessment**

HSSs said that assessing needs at the initial crisis stage was a mix of working with the needs expressed by family and anticipating needs that the FSW knew family will have.

*It depends on what the relationship to the deceased is.... What is the loss? What is the need around that? How can we help? What information do we have that we can provide? ... We have checklists and things like that ..... but it is really flexible because the variables are so many. [HSS]*

Where there were children the FSW talked to parents about support available for them and left information.

Family members appreciated that the FSW anticipated their needs.

*She came. I think she knew about all of my case. She has been running for me. She is going to the police and doing whatever I need, she does. I don't ask that I need this or I need that. She knows what her duty is and she is doing her duty very nicely. I am really grateful. [Participant 10]*

## **Dealing with the media at the initial crisis**

FSWs said that if family members wanted assistance in dealing with the media the FSW used the Victim Support brochure to discuss using privacy settings on social media, using an answer phone or voice mail, and possibly appointing a family spokesperson. They also warned families about exposure to media reports and might suggest a friend was asked to print media reports for reading at a later stage when the family was ready. FSWs said that it was important to be guided by the victim's wishes. FSWs could also work closely with Police media liaison people.

## **Debrief**

Throughout this stage there was close contact with the Homicide Support Specialist who was available for urgent direct advice or periodic debriefing over the case.

## **Strengths**

Police and counsellors who worked alongside FSWs stated that their strengths at the initial crisis stage were their calming effect on families, their intuition, their capability and their ability to work independently with families.

*Because when a homicide has occurred within a family nobody has ever experienced that before, so everybody is all over the show. [The FSW] has got that amazing ability to try and calm the situation down, start figuring out how she is going to deal with it, who is going to need lots of help, who is going to need some help, who is going to need no help, for the first four months.... She knows intuitively what is required, and she is not afraid to get in there. [Counsellor]*

*She turns up and she is there with the families and she engages with the families. To be honest I am so involved in kind of the prosecution and the evidence gathering side that I kind of leave that up to her.... From every interaction I have had with [The FSW], I have every faith in her capabilities so I would never question her how she deals with things. [Police]*

## **Summary: The initial crisis response**

The findings show that the service expectations for the initial crisis response are being followed and that family members and those who work alongside the FSW at this stage appreciate their capability, their calming effect and the information they give.

## **5 Linking with Police and the investigation**

### **Service expectations**

The Best Practice Guideline states that the homicide team needs to work closely with Police to ensure their approach will benefit the families and not cause conflicting or result in conflicting information or advice being given. However, Victim Support personnel must always be mindful that their primary focus is on supporting the families and working in their interests.

Family Support Workers are expected to make themselves known to key Police personnel involved. Regular liaison with the Officer in Charge (O/C) of the family helps to ensure support is well co-ordinated. The information that the O/C will provide can act as a guide for the Family Support Worker in identifying the family members who need support.

Close liaison with the Police is also essential when developing the Support Plan, for example finding out when an arrest is imminent or when the case will be coming to court. Family Support Workers and Homicide Support Workers may need to maintain contact with the survivor throughout the investigation and be there when the Police inform them that an arrest is imminent. They may also need to prepare family members for the likelihood that the whole criminal justice process may take a very long time.

The Family Support Worker should attend regular Police briefings and then brief the other homicide team members. Similarly, it is important that the Family Support Worker attends all meetings Police hold with the families. In this way, Workers are aware of the information that has been given to family members by Police, and can refer family members back to Police if they need anything clarified. (Victim Support, 2014)

### **How linking with Police and the investigation operated in the pilot**

During the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 the VIVA case management system records 369 support actions by FSWs for the purpose of Police liaison. Analyses by area are not presented as it appears this field has not been interpreted consistently by the three FSWs.

FSWs saw Police as a primary partner agency in providing support to homicide victims' families. Two FSW offices were located within a Police Station which also housed the district CIB and this facilitated communication and FSW attendance at Police briefings. Police who were interviewed for the evaluation said that the enhanced full time Victim Support service to families of homicide victims was welcomed at a time when Police themselves had a focus on improving their service to victims. Both Police and Victim Support were also very aware of their obligations to all victims set out in the Victims' Rights Act (2002).

Members of the Homicide Support Team, Police and family members identified several ways in which the FSWs linked with Police.



## Working jointly

FSWs were in close contact with the Officer in Charge of a case and often worked jointly with the Police Family Liaison Officer for the case. The Homicide Support team and Police said that it was important to continually clarify roles when working together on a case. Because the investigation stage could be lengthy there could be a series of meetings with family members and a great deal of communication.

*[FSW] would regularly contact me throughout ..... and she would say 'have we done this, have you done that, I will do this, do you want to do it'. .... So we were sort of like a real 'who is in the best position to deal with something?' She took a hell of a lot of pressure off me in dealing with the families. [Police]*

*After one of the first court appearances we all went to a café together with [FSW], [two family members] and the officer in charge of the file. We all sat just around and had coffee and talked about procedures and processes and what was happening. [Police]*

Families appreciated the way Police and the FSW worked together, especially when Police had difficult information to give.

*[Police and FSW] have all cohered together as well. They work seamlessly together to be fair. I am not sure if [FSW] is a police officer. She has got a very good relationship with the people around her I have noticed.... Even when they first arrived they showed up together. [Participant 9]*

*It was very helpful having [the FSW] there, and even the detectives and all the Police. They were here with us and it was really good. .... They all came along and each one was having their say to help the family. It was excellent. [Participant 1]*

*Then when I had the final meeting with the detective...., he read out.... what had actually happened from day one to court that I didn't know a lot about. There were things I didn't know. They came in and spent two hours with me. Of course I bawled my eyes out because there were quite a few things. He read it out and I was really really surprised. .... She [FSW] just jumped up and cuddled me and supported me. She is like a mother. I can't fault her. I would give her 110 out of 100 if possible. [Participant 7]*

Working together was particularly important when a charge was downgraded or dropped:

*Like for instance I read an article; I googled it, any updates on the death. I found that the police had dropped a charge. So I rang [the FSW] straight away. I said 'they have dropped a charge'. She said 'they haven't... let you know'? I said 'no'. So she got up to it straight away. The police had rung me within five minutes of me hanging up from her. [Participant 17]*

At times working jointly involved the FSW taking on some of the Police family liaison role when there were changes in Police staff in a long case.

*Ultimately the original officer that was appointed left the police, so there was another appointed. I [Officer in Charge] picked up some of that mantel and then the file manager did.... So really clunky from our point of view and in terms of service delivery, victim, less than ideal. [The FSW] has filled that void. [Police]*

### **FSW acts as a conveyer of information to families**

FSWs might join a meeting organised by Police to update family members, or they might suggest a meeting where a family were seeking information. Because investigation processes could be lengthy, it was important that the FSW kept in contact with Police and regularly informed the family even when there was no progress to report. FSW attendance at Police briefings assisted their understanding of how the investigation was progressing. FSWs and Police said that some family members were happy to have direct communication with Police while others may prefer to ask the FSW to liaise between them and Police.

*So you have got victims who are traditionally offenders, and you are trying to engage with them. I think sometimes having a non-police person do that, because they are a step removed if you like, is an assistance because we need to engage with them and we still need to talk to them. But having someone like [the FSW] do that I think is of value. [Police]*

*So for my investigation basically [the FSW] has been I guess kind of the go-between for the family who are spread far and wide and overseas. There are sort of quite a few different people in the family who aren't necessarily linked into our investigation, who have very little to do with the investigation, and she is able to update them and I guess really just to act as a go-between between them and the police. While we have had our own direct contact with them, she is sort of like a familiar face with them and she can answer all those questions that they tend to come to us with..., which we actually can't help with. [Police]*

*I did not want to talk [to Police]. I was frightened they might say something I didn't want to hear. But [the FSW] was there. She did the talking for me. [Participant 19]*

Police and family members said it was important to have the FSW involved when difficult or little information was to be conveyed, such as when there was a delay in arresting a suspect because evidence was being gathered, when a charge was downgraded, or when an investigation was to be wound down.

*We managed to sit down with them and said 'look we will tell you exactly what we can tell you. We will give you as much information as we can. However there are some things that we can't tell you about this trial because it may affect the way that the trial goes. We don't want to jeopardise that and make it unfair.' [The FSW] worked through that really really well. They kind of didn't want to engage at the beginning, but with the meetings and that kind of thing .... It has certainly been made a lot easier. [Police]*

*FSW did a video conference for us at the Police Station. That was fantastic. Our case had a lot of mucking around.... They were trying to have them for murder. But what*

*happened is they said they would plead guilty for manslaughter. So that was why the first case was dropped the day before because they decided they would plead guilty to manslaughter, and the Police accepted that. [Participant 6]*

Police and FSWs worked to ensure there was no duplication in information given to families.

*There wasn't really [duplication], because [the FSW] was getting her information from me and so she would say 'do you want me to let the family know?' or 'would you let the family know that?' So where it was appropriate for it to come from the police, I would let them know. Where it was maybe something that wasn't so significant, I would ask her to let them know. [Police]*

### **FSW as an expert on victim support**

Police and the Homicide Support Team also spoke of the FSW acting as an expert advisor or subject matter expert on a homicide team. As such, the FSW might ensure that Police fulfilled their responsibility for updating family on the progress of their case, speak in family meetings about the services available to victims, obtain funding for families, advocate for families, provide family with emotional support during meetings with Police, and help Police to come up with strategies for communicating with complex families.

*So we were trying to co-ordinate a meeting among all the family members so that [the FSW] could come and speak, and she agreed. So she came and spoke to the family members and gave them all the opportunity. She said these are the options available and these are not the options and this is what can be done and this is what can't be done. So she was very clear. She was quite clear in terms of, and in fact to be frank ... I learnt a lot as well like what is available and what is not available. [Police]*

*We took [the FSW] to family meetings; [the FSW] can hug them and comfort them; Police can't do that – they don't visualise you as a support – she can give tissues and glasses of water and we know that person is being treated and cared for. [Police]*

FSWs rarely attended formal interviews carried out by Police for the purpose of gathering evidence.

### **Strengths of linking with Police and the investigation**

Police observed that the involvement of the FSW had led to:

- more consistent information being provided to families
- families receiving financial assistance they were entitled to
- families receiving a better service from Police
- more family members feeling involved in the case process.

*So basically what they are providing from the start is we are kind of providing information about what is happening and about the investigation, and it is all kind of consistent. We seem to be on the same page about everything, so that they are getting that factual*

*information that is consistent as well, both from the police and homicide worker, and also dealing with any grants or help or assistance that they can provide to basically the family of our victims. [Police]*

*The service is invaluable, to have [the FSW] taking care of that side of the business – it is being done, properly – we can neglect families. They feel informed, they know what's going on. [Police]*

*Without [the FSW] we wouldn't have done as good a job or as intensive a job – we dealt with three family member groups – a large complex family. Everybody who wanted to be involved has been involved, everyone has had a voice. [Police]*

Police also spoke of the trust they had in the FSW and appreciated that the FSW was careful to check with them on information to be passed to the family.

*[The FSW] makes sure she's well appraised – the best thing is she will run by us what she is planning to let the family know. [Police]*

*But I think [the FSW] has built up quite quickly the trust of most of the investigation managers. She sits in on the briefings. She knows exactly what is going on. More important, she knows what we can't let the family know for various reasons. [Police]*

## **Challenges of liaising with Police and the investigation**

FSWs needed to make sure family members saw them as independent from Police, particularly when families were in dispute with Police. One family member warned against the FSW becoming 'too close' to Police.

*I actually don't want them getting too close to the police because that doesn't make Victim Support independent.... So when [the FSW] comes to me that is just between me and Victim Support – nothing to do with them. [Participant 14]*

A further challenge identified from the interviews is the similarities in the roles of the Police Family Liaison Officer and the FSW. The FSW needs to take care not to take on all of the Police responsibility when Police resources are scarce, although some willingness to help out may be in the best interests of the family.

## **Summary: Linking with Police and the investigation**

The findings show that FSWs have established a close and trusted relationship with Police in their local areas. They attended Police briefings and were seen by some Police as an expert advisor on their team. They provided support in Police meetings with families and conveyed information to families from Police. Family members appreciated having the Police and the FSW working closely together and Police believed the role of the FSW had resulted in a better service to victims' families.

## 6 Linking with other agencies and services

### Service expectations

The Best Practice Guideline (Victim Support, 2014) states that Family Support Worker liaison or collaboration with agencies and services (other than Police) may entail referring family members, seeking information on families' behalf, contacting agencies in support of the family members, attending the agency with a family member as a support person and advocating for a family's needs.

Other than Police, agencies and services the Family Support Worker is expected to liaise with include:

- The Court Services for Victims Victim Advisor, who prepares and assists the victim to participate in the Criminal Justice System
- The General Practitioner
- The hospital in relation to matters such as identification of the deceased, the post mortem, and organ donation. The Family Support Worker's role in all hospital procedures is to ensure that survivors have adequate information from the appropriate source to make good informed decisions.
- The Funeral Director
- ACC in relation to grants available to the survivors of homicide, including the Funeral Grant and the Survivors Grant. ACC may also be able to assist with childcare payments, lost wages and counselling.
- Victim Assistance Schemes (VAS): Victim Support is contracted by the Ministry of Justice to administer payment of a number of grants to victims of crime. Family Support Workers are to make survivors aware of the grant schemes, complete VAS applications and forward them to the Homicide Service Specialist for approval. Available Grants include:
  - A Discretionary Grant: assists immediate family with reducing the financial impact of dealing with homicide
  - Homicide Counselling: trauma counselling for families, friends, witnesses and the first on the scene of a homicide
  - Travel Assistance: assists with costs associated with travelling to court or parole hearings (including video conferencing costs) for family members and support people.
  - Homicide High Court Attendance (from 1 Jan 2010): per diem payment for up to five family members who lose income as a result of attending High Court
  - Crime Scene Grant: assists with costs for emergency accommodation and food, and cleaning due to home or car being unavailable as a crime scene.

Additional agencies expected to possibly be involved in supporting the family include Child, Youth and Family (CYF); Women’s Refuge, Churches, Schools and workplaces, and insurance companies.

### **How Family Support Workers linked with other services in the pilot**

There were 371 recorded support actions for the purpose of contact with other agencies during the year 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

**Table 6: The number of support actions recorded by each FSW for the purposes of contact with other agencies at each pilot site from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015**

<b>Pilot site</b>	<b>No. Support Actions for purposes of contact with other agencies</b>
<b>Auckland</b>	120
<b>Counties Manukau</b>	101
<b>Christchurch</b>	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>

In addition to Police, the primary services that FSWs liaised with were counsellors, Court Victim Advisors, the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC), funeral directors and Crown prosecutors. A senior manager said the role was to link and co-ordinate services so that the help available to families was ‘seamless’ in that there were no barriers or gaps or duplication of services in addressing victim needs. In their role as advocate for family members, FSWs also ensured that key agencies carried out their responsibilities to the victim families.

### **Court Victim Advisors**

Because it was a new role, the FSWs and HSSs had initially organised meetings with the Court Victim Advisors (CVAs) to introduce themselves and discuss how the two roles might work together. It was particularly important to decide processes for identifying who were primary family members, who informed the family about court processes, and who supported them at court. By mutual agreement, this varied from case to case.

Both CVAs and FSWs said that in practice the relevant FSW and CVA were in frequent contact to ensure that families were kept informed and supported seamlessly, accurately and without duplication. It was agreed that the CVAs and FSWs would be led by family preferences as to who contacted families and who within families was contacted directly. For example some families expressed a preference that the CVA liaised with the FSW rather than directly with the family. It was important that CVAs and FSWs consulted with each other when it was necessary to impart difficult information for example when a convicted offender decided to appeal a case or sentence.

The two roles had specific areas of expertise, for example CVAs were well versed in the meaning of court processes and regulations and would advise FSWs when asked. FSWs were specialists in homicide support and provided emotional and practical support to families. The two roles complemented each other in meeting the needs of families. Both services were careful to pass each other information about families only with the agreement of the family.

At the time of a trial the roles were more clearly delineated. The CVA met with the families to orientate them to the court environment and prepare them for the trial. At this time a plan was generally developed to identify support and other needs of family, such as seating space, the availability of a victim room, and tea and coffee facilities. The FSW or a voluntary homicide support worker might attend court with the family and continue to ensure all of these needs were provided for.

### **Counsellors**

There were 564 recorded support actions for the purpose of counselling recorded during the year 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. However, the figures in Table 7 suggest there may be some inconsistencies in recording practices.

**Table 7: The number of support actions recorded by each FSW for the purposes of counselling at each pilot site from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015**

<b>Pilot site</b>	<b>No. Support Actions for the purpose of counselling</b>
<b>Auckland FSW</b>	304
<b>Counties Manukau FSW</b>	155
<b>Christchurch FSW</b>	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>564</b>

FSWs said they discussed the availability of counselling with family members at an early stage and referred individual family members to counsellors once they request this. They had actively sought out and held a register of counsellors offering a range of counselling types, such as equine therapy, art therapy or sand therapy, or specialist psychological support (in addition to general counselling) so that referrals could be matched as closely as possible to the individual's need. A counsellor said:

*My job has been to help them deal with the trauma that has happened and gather their emotional resources and heal a little bit. [Counsellor]*

Care was taken over the amount of information exchanged between the FSW and counsellors with details being divulged only with the family member's agreement.

A number of family members interviewed for the evaluation appreciated being offered and participating in counselling. However, not all family members asked for counselling and some asked for counselling some time after the homicide. Those who did have counselling appreciated that the FSW considered their needs in recommending a counsellor.

*I ended up having counselling. I had come back to work too early I think... I rang [the FSW] and I said '... I need to talk with someone.' She arranged it. She found someone for me that was close for me, because I bus everywhere. I am a jump on the bus girl.... It is not too far. It sits on the bus route to and from. So [FSW] found that. So I went counselling with her twice. It was just to blow off a lot of heat, a lot of steam. [Participant 2]*

*She had organised a counsellor for me who, there was a selection and I picked one and it was fantastic. She has been great. So absolutely brilliant. [Participant 24]*

Some had needs that could not be met by counselling.

*I go and see my counsellor lady. But not too much. But I don't need to talk... I just need people to understand. I talk about the same things all the time and I get the same answers. I need something better than what they have given me. I don't need to hear 'oh you need to heal'. How do I heal? [Participant 4]*

Family members were also reassured that other members of the family were getting help. A number of family members identified a need for children or grandchildren, both adults and minors who were affected by the homicide, to have counselling. This worked well when all members of the family accepted counselling.

*She has offered the whole family if they want to go to counselling they can go to counselling. She finds a place that is close to the area where they stay..... My grandkids still go. They go on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. [Participant 5]*

However some children did not respond or engage when offered counselling, in some cases preferring to talk with the FSW rather than a 'stranger'. This was problematic when the children were minors (16 years of age or under) as the FSW did not work directly with minors because of Victim Support policy.

*Even at this stage [the children] don't want to see anyone or talk to anyone.... They knew that [the FSW] was there but they also knew that I had to be there with them when they were speaking to [the FSW]. But they also knew about the counselling.... That is the good thing about it I suppose, is that even though they didn't have it or they felt that they didn't need it now, it is still available forever sort of thing – which is really good. That is one thing I really appreciate about Victim Support is because it is there for them, so once they are adults and stuff, if they decide that they do want to talk about it. [Participant 15]*

## **The Prosecution**

The Homicide Support team said that crown prosecutors were not generally involved with victims until close to the trial. The Crown prosecutors generally met the FSWs and became



aware of their role at their first meetings with family members before a trial. There was sometimes phone contact and contact or further meetings through the course of the trial. Prosecutors saw the interaction was valuable for keeping families informed.

*Yes, [the FSW] does [keep up to date with Prosecution team]. Not in a way that is overbearing or difficult for us to deal with, but we know she is there and we know that it is in our interest to keep her in the loop so that she can keep the family in the loop, and that saves sort of the angst growing along the way. As you would appreciate, these are just extremely difficult trials to run and extremely difficult trials to sit through, particularly if you are coming from the point of view of a deceased family member. I hesitate to use the word buffer, because we do want to engage with the families as much as we can, but having someone else who can take the load of that responsibility is as I say invaluable. [Crown prosecutor]*

One Crown prosecutor said that the FSW role helped the Crown in establishing a rapport with family members who were also witnesses.

Another Crown prosecutor thought that the FSW role helped Crown prosecutors in maintaining their role in relation to victims' families.

*[The FSW] is a completely independent person in a completely independent role. Whereas our role is a little bit different in that we are not representing one party or another. So it has been helpful. We will come and explain things to the family, and then after we have done that as best as we can we leave. But there is someone there who can answer any questions or pick up any follow ups and come to us. So it has been helpful in that respect. [Crown prosecutor]*

### **Victim Assistance Scheme (financial assistance)**

The total number of approved VAS grant applications processed by the FSWs from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015 was 534 (Table 8).

**Table 8: The number of approved VAS grant applications by the FSWs at each pilot site from 1/7/14 – 30/6/15**

<b>Pilot Site</b>	<b>No. of VAS applications</b>
<b>Auckland FSW<sup>11</sup></b>	92
<b>Counties Manukau FSW</b>	246
<b>Christchurch FSW</b>	196
<b>Total</b>	<b>534</b>

Those interviewed from Victim Support said that, as part of the early engagement with families, Victim Support made sure the families were aware of the financial assistance that

<sup>11</sup> This FSW was in place from October 2014.

was available for families of homicide victims and what it was for. It was often necessary to oversee the ACC application as some funeral directors were not aware of entitlements for homicide victims. FSWs said that knowing about the financial assistance alleviated a lot of worry for families.

*So we talk to them about the discretionary grant that we administer. We talk to them about the ACC funding that is available for them. We can get the ACC form to them and we can assist them to fill them in if they want to, and liaise with ACC if they have got any questions. I have been asked to liaise with funeral directors, because sometimes not all funeral directors fully understand the ACC funding and so they will say things to families that aren't accurate.... I will often talk to the funeral director and get them to call ACC to try and sort out any issues we have got around that. [FSW]*

It was important that there was family agreement over which members of the family should receive the discretionary grant and families generally came to a decision once the purpose of the grant was explained. Funding applications were also important for family living overseas, and for family attending court hearings.

Family members who were interviewed confirmed that the funding available coupled with practical assistance from the FSW alleviated anxiety.

*Because sometimes I face problems. I am on Work and Income support. So it is not enough for me. Every day I have got visitors here.... In my custom you have to do the prayer ever day unless the burial is finished.... So we have to do the cooking and everything until the burial is finished. So sometimes I face it a little bit hard because I can't afford all the time..... [The FSW] told me like about the funeral, ACC will cover, and the overseas person will get this amount.... But she arranged everything for me. [Participant 10]*

Family members referred to FSWs arranging financial help for the funeral, and flights, petrol, food, accommodation, parking, taxis and lost wages associated with attending court, restorative justice, appeal and parole hearings. Some said they would not have been able to attend hearings without this assistance. FSWs did the paperwork and made direct arrangements for the family members so that the logistics of attending hearings in the unfamiliar court environments were smoothed.

*[The FSW] arranged our transport, cabs everything.... Throughout this and even when [another family member] flew back from [Australia] this year, because he was one of the ones that came back for these hearings, she emailed me. She was brilliant. She sent that through. Gave me details of his flight. [Participant 2]*

*Well [the FSW] actually arranged from here to [the High Court where the trial took place] and back again. Every single thing was done.... You don't have to worry about booking fares, flights and things like that. [Participant 29]*

*I applied for financial assistance – [the FSW] must have done the paperwork. I didn't have to pay for the funeral; she helped me with financial affairs; everything was very easy because of that. [Participant 16]*

*[The FSW] did all of that for us. We didn't even have to think twice. Because obviously I have got [another family member] in Australia so [the FSW] arranged for them to make sure that they were here every time so that we could be together as a family; as well as .... in Wellington Then there was obviously the funding for while we were at court to cover wages. We didn't have to think about it. She did it all and just told us what was happening. [Participant 23]*

### **Additional services**

Additional services that FSWs had liaised with over specific cases were General Practitioners, ACC, WINZ, Housing New Zealand, schools, funeral directors, Strengthening Families, DHBs. For agencies such as ACC and WINZ where the FSW was frequently advocating for families, the FSW and HSS worked to establish sound lasting relationships.

### **Strengths of linking with other services**

Stakeholders stated that the FSWs were professional, easy to work with, and proactive in relation to families' needs.

*I find [the homicide support service] exceptionally helpful and very professional. [Counsellor]*

*I have found them to be very very easy to work with, very excellent at communicating the needs of the family in a respectful way and trying to work together to make sure that those needs can be accommodated as far as the court process goes. [Court Victim Advisor]*

*There is definitely a sense of cohesion just in the working relationships, and I love the fact that they are so pro-active. Not in a pushy way, but they are certainly as I said very well aware of who we are and very willing to connect with us for the purposes of navigating these families through the process. I love that. I love that they come into this prepared, and they come in with the expectation that they know what these families need and they are going to do what they can to get it. [Court Victim Advisor]*

Several Court Victim Advisors said that the FSW role had led to better cohesion between services leading to a better quality of service for the families of homicide victims.

*So in a sense it was in this case the three of us then doing our bit - the officer in charge, me as Victim Advisor and [the FSW] as cultural interpreter as well as support person - to take care. So it was a delight to know it was working really well from what I could see. [Court Victim Advisor]*

*I guess how we have always worked is when you have a family who is dealing with homicide through the system is that there is Victim Support, there is CIB, there is the*

*Victim Liaison Officer with Police, and there is Court Services for Victims. Now we all perform an intricate dance around this family, and the family shouldn't know when we step on each other's toes. All the family should know is that they are getting what they need at that particular time. So we needed [the FSW], rather than what [Victim Support] had before .... with [the FSW] we knew right, she was there, she was doing that and was going to be consistently doing that. [Court Victim Adviser]*

The families interviewed saw the way the FSW worked with the funding available to meet families' needs as a strength of the role.

*[The FSW] did all of [the funding applications and associated arrangements] too. We I would say aren't aware of any of that. So she informed us about it. It is such a helpful thing. It really is. It is just incredible. It was so unexpected, but everyone was just so grateful for it. Really were. [Participant 9]*

### **Summary: Linking with other services**

The findings show that FSWs have established sound relationships with Court Victim Advisors, counsellors and Crown prosecutors, to the benefit of victims' families. Some said that the role had led to better cohesion between the services in meeting families' needs. Family members particularly appreciated the FSWs' linking them with financial help.

## 7 Support through the criminal justice process

### Service expectation

**Court:** The Best Practice Guideline (Victim Support, 2014) states that preparing families well for court may include arranging for the family to meet the O/C prior to the trial, liaising with the Victim Adviser, providing information to families about transport, preparing families for the fact they are going to encounter supporters of the accused and the accused will be in the courtroom. FSWs may also make arrangements for safety such as organising an escort into court, use of a side entrance to court, and a quiet isolated waiting area. Other matters to prepare families for include the likely presence of the media, the length of court days, advising that it isn't appropriate to bring children to the court room, and the possibility that the crown prosecutor and the defence lawyer might relate in a friendly manner outside the courtroom. FSWs may also ensure that family members are aware of the protocols for witnesses. At the end of each day, the Worker might debrief with families.

Other criminal justice processes for which FSWs may provide support are:

**Giving evidence:** A family may specifically request a support person in court with them while giving evidence and this may be a Family Support Worker or Homicide Support Worker who needs to be aware of the rules around this role.

**Victim Impact Statement:** If the Worker has been asked to support the family in this, it is to be done in accordance with the *Best Practice Guideline; Supporting Victims in Preparing a Victim Impact Statement*.

**Sentencing:** FSWs may have a role in assisting families to attend through access to Victims Assistance Schemes and ensuring they understand the "process" of sentencing.

**Appeal:** If an accused decides to appeal a conviction or sentence, this may be a very stressful time for the family and they may need to be supported through this time.

**Victim Notification System:** It is the role of the Family Support Worker to ensure families have received information about Victim Notification so they can make an informed choice about whether to register. FSWs are also expected to support families who have queries or problems with their registration and help them access the information they need

**Parole:** Workers can assist families of homicide victims to prepare for a Parole Hearing. This may include explaining the process and supporting the family with the preparation of their submission.

**Restorative Justice:** a post-sentence Restorative Justice Conference may be requested either by the offender or the family. Workers can provide information on the process for post-sentence Restorative Justice as well as attending with a family for support.

### How support through the criminal justice process was delivered in the pilot

Support provided through the pathway of the criminal justice process is recorded in the VIVA case management system in terms of support actions/purpose of contact. Table 9 below

shows that the main purpose of contact was recorded as follow-up support (although other purposes could be included in this category), followed by information and court attendance<sup>12</sup>.

**Table 9: Number of support actions for each purpose of contact by the FSWs from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015**

<b>Purpose of Contact</b>	<b>No. of support actions</b>
Advocacy	49
Coronial preparation	18
Coronial attendance	5
Court preparation	228
Court attendance	533
Family Group Conference attendance	3
Final Contact	99
Follow-up support	3940
Information	910
Initial support	215
Liaison (non-Police)	94
Parole Board preparation	31
Parole Board attendance	4
Police liaison	369
Restorative justice preparation	82
Restorative justice attendance	17
Risk screen	1
VAS application	280
Victim Impact Statement	238
VNR Information	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>7174</b>

An HSS explained that the role of the FSW with families during in the criminal justice process was to ensure families' needs were met, interpret what happened, debrief them at key stages and to be a single point of contact through a complex process. A Court Victim

<sup>12</sup> The table is useful for understanding the range of actions and purposes but as there are likely to be some inconsistencies in the way data is entered caution should be exercised in comparing the relative quantities.

Adviser said that now that more financial assistance<sup>13</sup> was available more family members have been enabled to attend trials. In their view it was very necessary to have someone specifically trained to support them through the process.

### **The court process**

When helping family gather for the first appearance in the District Court, FSWs would notify the Court Victim Advisor that family would attend so that court staff were aware. FSWs explained that assisting families to attend pre-trial hearings was a way of introducing them to the court environment before the main trial. Some administrative hearings were not particularly relevant for family, but they were always given the option of attending.

*We went ... when he was entering a plea for the murder, and that was pretty horrific. It was just at the District Court in .... He was standing there. I came face to face with him. I think my heart came out of my mouth. Feeling so close to him, and he was just so smug about it. It really was a hard day; that was. So I decided no. If [the FSW] says it is an administration one, we will leave it at that and I won't go. I will just save it up because it is going to be hard anyway I guess. [Participant 17]*

Some families chose to make submissions opposing bail. The FSWs said they assist with writing up the reasons and the Court Victim Advisor would draw up a court memorandum to be submitted to the judge.

Close to the trial date FSWs participated in one or two meetings involving the family, Police and the Crown prosecutor. The prosecutor explained the likely process of the Crown's case, and at what points explicit material such as CCTV footage or a murder weapon that may be upsetting for the family was likely to be presented. Crown prosecutors and Police appreciated the FSW role in these meetings.

*From the outset, particularly in serious cases like that, the prosecution almost always go and meet the victims. So we went out to their address. [The FSW] was there facilitating that. I went there with the officer in charge. So she was there from day one that I recall. . [Crown prosecutor]*

*I think we also did a pre-trial court visit, so [the family] sort of knew where things were and what was going to be happening. That just helped us. Well one, reassured that the victims had been taken care of, but also helped us establish a rapport with some of the victims who obviously were also witnesses.... So that is the type of role that I sort of experience in how [the FSWs] help.... [Crown prosecutor]*

*We bring [victims' families] into our wider conference room, and there have been a lot of those. So [the FSW] is always at that table with the Crown Solicitor and with the key*

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<sup>13</sup> The FSW role in assisting with funding for attending criminal justice processes is discussed in Section 6 of this report.

*police personnel. She is part of all those conversations. Often she will be the person who meets and greets, and she is always the last to see them off – some less than ideal messages they have had to bear sometimes. [Police]*

The Court Victim Advisors also invited the family to attend a familiarisation session at the High Court. The FSW followed up with further preparation and advice.

FSWs also explained that supporting the families during a trial was an important part of the role. They could help the family through some of the distressing parts of the trial, keep them informed about the process, answer questions, arrange further meetings with Police and the Crown Prosecutor, make sure the right facilities were provided, and interpret what was said. For some trials the FSW remained with the family throughout. For others where this was not possible, the FSW could arrange a volunteer support worker to attend and attend themselves at key points such as the opening, closing, verdict and sentencing.

### **Types of support families found helpful through the court process**

#### ***Being kept informed:***

*So this trial, [the FSW] has done brilliantly. She has kept everybody informed, emailed everyone should there be any changes in the court system. Like court times and she has kept me company .... informed on everything. [She] emailed every time there was a meeting; kept us informed about having meetings with the crown prosecutor and his assistant and the detectives and all that. [Participant 2]*

#### ***Having a volunteer support worker in place of the FSW:***

*If [the FSW] wasn't there she would tell me, but she has always had someone, a volunteer worker from Victim Support, who would come and fill in for her when she couldn't make it. The only reason why she can't make it is because she is at another court case.... We get to know [the volunteer support worker]. They are just like [the FSW]. [Participant 5]*

#### ***Being forewarned of distressing content:***

*[The FSW] prepared us for the ... first day. The graphic side of the case whereby it would be shown on the screen, the bodies will be shown on the screen. We were forewarned. [The FSW] was very sincere when she said this. She said it to all of us. It came from the heart when [she] spoke about it. She says there is going to be a graphic shown on TV.... You have a choice to watch it, and then you have a choice not to watch it. She prepped us for that, you see, and I said I didn't really want to watch it. [Participant 2]*

*We wouldn't have been able to do it without [the FSW's] advice.... [It's] not easy to sit in a murder trial with a plate of glass between you and the murderer.... She just told us what to expect for the day [in trial]. She helped us through but you can never really prepare for what happens. She said there may be things we may not like and we needed to digest. [Participant 21]*



**Having questions answered:**

*If we had some questions regarding anything to ask the police, [the FSW] straight away called one of the constables and solved our question. [Participant 8]*

**Having what was said explained:**

*She tells me what had happened in the court. She tells me the easy way. Because I don't understand the way a court talks. I don't know what they are saying, so she always comes. We sit in an interview room and then she will tell me two or three times. She will ask 'do you understand now ...?' [Participant 10]*

**Having logistics taken care of:**

*At the trial [the FSW] was there every day. Just making sure that we were okay. Obviously she has done a lot of work in actually getting everybody to the trial too. There has been a lot of organising on her part. Simple things from even your parking to where to stay. All the logistics of it, and she has done all of that. As well as just being there and just talking to you if you get any questions and stuff. She stayed very I wouldn't say neutral, but she has not really offered her opinion on anything. She has just been really supportive. [Participant 9]*

**Being supported:**

*Even in the court case it is hard talking about what happened. It was really bad. As [the FSW] was there it was good. I break down and I end up good because she was there with me. She always sat with by me holding my hand and rubbed my back. It was really helpful. Really good. But I know it was rough but at least somebody is there for you eh. [Participant 19]*

**Debriefing:**

*I think the first time we sat in the court together it was just good to have somebody else hear what I heard and to talk to about it afterwards. But... just with some intellect and understanding around it. [Participant 24]*

**Being kept safe:**

*Then when we had the final court case.... I asked [the FSW] if we could all meet at the police station and I told her the reason why; the other family will be there and there might be a bit of friction so we can be escorted to the court with [the FSW] and the police officers, which happened. That is what happened. So she organised it all for us. So we met down at the police station.... and we got escorted across the road. I just told her what I wanted, and she did it. [Participant 5]*

**Coping with changes of schedule: (a common experience for families):**

*[The FSW] did all the stuff to get us all up there for the trials. Because they sacked their lawyer, we went up there and then it didn't go ahead and we had to come back. There was all this carry on with them. It was all about them. They are the important people,*

*those criminals. So yeah, there was all of that. It had to be cancelled and rescheduled and all of that sort of stuff. [The FSW] did all of that. She was right there. We didn't have to worry about a thing. I didn't worry about anything. [Participant 25]*

*When you are about to hop on a plane and go down for a two week trial, to ring up and say 'it is off', it sort of throws you. You have booked your time off work. You are going in the middle of winter down there so you have made sure you have got all warm clothes and that, and then suddenly you are not going. It really throws you.... It was like 'it is off'. There was no date given for when it was going to be on or what was happening. [Participant 6]*

*And you soak yourself up ready for it. It is a horrible process because it is all really in the courts hands. When this happens, when that happens. [Participant 30]*

### **Sentencing:**

*You have views [of the family] for example at sentencing where you might have disappointment around the sentence that has been imposed, and it is just talking through that. Having Police talk to them and explain that often the decisions are based on case law and judges aren't just plucking figures out of the air. It is really just supporting them through. [FSW]*

*She was there for the plea and the sentencing, and helped us after that because it was pretty crappy. [Participant 24]*

FSWs also said it was important to provide support at the verdict and to provide follow-up support. Support was particularly important to families when there was a 'not guilty' verdict.

*The jury verdict is a very stressful time for them because they are trusting 12 people they have never met.... It is trusting that those people will deliver the result that they want.... It is just a support role really. I have had verdicts that have come back not guilty, and I have had the offender hop down out of the box and walk out of the court. That has been incredibly hard for the family.... So for them it was liaising with Police and supporting them to make sure that they went in one direction and the offender went in another. It was supporting them around liaising with the media, and they had already prepared a statement if they had a guilty verdict or if they had a not guilty verdict so they went down that path. Then there was a lot of support in the days afterwards talking with them about how they were feeling and reminding them to go to counselling again if that is what they wanted to do. They met with Police; we assisted to organise a meeting afterwards so that they could talk about what happened. If you get a guilty verdict you have got that elation around someone has been held accountable, but it still doesn't bring back the person they have lost. [FSW]*

One family member found being prepared for a 'not guilty by reason of insanity' verdict was helpful:

*I was always told when the trial was on and what was the result – the detective and [the FSW] would ring me. They explained clearly why he was declared insane – I understood; they wanted a second opinion; the judge may have kept the case open; at the last trial two psychiatrists were there. It made it easier to know that the man had a mental health problem – it wasn't malicious. [Participant 16]*

### **Witness support**

FSWs explained to family members who were to give evidence that they could have a support person to sit with them. One of the FSWs had been support person for several family members, carefully explaining the rules around their role beforehand. A Crown prosecutor spoke of the settling impact this support could have on witnesses.

*Obviously you can't coach a witness or school a witness or tell a witness to say anything, and Victim Support don't play any role in that. It is really just I think being there to reassure them.... Going through that process with them.... just sort of takes care of one thing that then we don't have to and then puts them as at ease as they can be given the situation they are in. [Crown prosecutor]*

### **Victim Impact Statements**

FSWs explained that they spoke with family members about the Victim Impact Statement (VIS) once a trial date had been set. They might suggest that family members write down thoughts so that they didn't forget important points during the long period up to the trial. However, it was important not to put too much emphasis on the VIS until a guilty verdict was reached. Some family members completed the VIS using the template and some explanation from the FSW, while others needed help with writing. FSWs had also sometimes read out the VIS in court on behalf of family members. Police particularly appreciated FSWs' contribution to VISs.

*I think the quality of the statements when you have got someone who is doing them exclusively or has got specific training around them, there is a better product there.... Because victims get quite frustrated sometimes with the limitations as to what they can put in the Victim Impact Statements because a lot of them just want to get in there and really have a vent, which is understandable. But I think [it is helpful] having [the FSW] there to sort of guide them as to what essentially the judge is going to listen to and what potentially they are not going to listen to as well. [Police]*

Family members also appreciated help with VISs and in some cases found the process of preparing and submitting them beneficial. The FSW's assistance with the VIS was helpful in:

#### **Expressing feelings for the first time:**

*When I did the Victim [Impact] statement it really helped me out to open up with everything. I didn't do any counselling session but the Victim Impact Statement helped*

me out a lot. My old stress was gone. [The FSW] came to my ... house. She asked me some questions. She said just feel free to answer, you don't have to answer. But I opened up that time, just to clear everything up.... After giving the statement I just feel so free.... Actually I cried that time while I was giving the statement. I liked it. It was so helpful for me. [The FSW] treated us so nice. After I did the Victim Support Statement, I built up my relationship good with my partner. Because I did not tell her some things but I actually tell on the statement because I just wanted to clear up everything. [Participant 8]

#### **Understanding the impact of the homicide on children:**

[The FSW] was great writing the Victim Impact Statement. The three of us actually met [the FSW] at a coffee shop and we did that and it was a nice relaxed atmosphere. I did one for the three of us. With them being minors of course they couldn't sort of do their own.... It was a group effort actually because the four of us were together, well myself and the children and [the FSW].... It was mainly for the kids, but she also put the kids' words into it as well, because she asked for their input and stuff. So I thought that was really important that their thoughts came into it as well.... And of course doing the Victim Impact Statement was the first time I had heard a lot. I sort of knew them, but it was the first time I had heard them out of [my child's] mouth. [It was] helpful, heart-breaking, very emotional. It was very emotional at [the coffee shop] that day. [Participant 15]

#### **Delivering a message to the offender's family:**

So she helped us through that statement, because I went to see her over at the Police Station... and she asked me what I would like to say. What do you want to say? We could write it down and do it together. She gave [us] the opportunity if [we] wanted to get up in court and say [our] statements.... She did also tell us that when we do read it out, the other family is also in the court room. So you are actually reading it out to everybody, to the defendant's family.... I made sure they heard it loud and clear - didn't need a microphone. [Participant 5]

#### **Victim Notification Register (VNR)**

FSWs said they made sure families who were eligible and wished to were registered with the Victim Notification system soon after an arrest. It was helpful that families could indicate on the VNR form that they wanted Victim Support to be advised on any change in the accused's circumstance.

Then she sent away a form to the Victim Support that they have to advise me any movements of this [offender]. If [the offender] gets sick or dies or whatever, [the FSW] told me that they have to tell me. They have put me on a notification register. That if [the offender] gets transferred from ... out here where she is down the line somewhere they have got to inform me. [The FSW] asked me if I would like that and I said yes please. [Participant 7]

## Appeal

FSWs and family members said that family members found it difficult when convicted offenders decided to appeal the conviction or sentence. It was important that FSWs prepared them for the possibility, explained the law around appeals, and reminded them that there was funding to enable them to attend appeal hearings. A family member said:

*I rang [the FSW] up. The last time I rang her I said 'guess what?' She goes 'what?' I said 'he is now going to appeal the sentence he was given.... So sure enough he told prosecution and he is on preventative detention, he got it and now he is appealing that. I am certain he will get a pay-out now. Oh God that will be all we need. [Participant 25]*

Police said the consistency of the FSW relationship was particularly valuable when a retrial was ordered.

*A retrial has been ordered. So it is going to continue onwards. So this is going to go on for another year. Those relationships are going to be invaluable now because retrials are sometimes the worst because you have been through it, you have got your verdict, you have got your sentence, and now suddenly we have got to go back again. [Police]*

## Restorative justice

FSWs said that following a trial, a defence lawyer might say that an offender wanted restorative justice. If so, the FSW provided the family with information about restorative justice so that they could make an informed decision about whether they wanted to participate. Most families preferred to wait till the sentence had been handed down as they didn't want restorative justice process to affect the sentencing outcome. Arrangements might need to be made for family members to travel to the prison from within New Zealand or overseas. A family member said:

*We could choose whether we wanted to go down or not, which seven of us did, and hear what one of [the offenders] wanted.... He wanted to meet us. So we did go down, and [the FSW] of course helped us all to arrange that. It was quite good too actually. There was a Victim Support lady. It is quite good. I wondered what point there was meeting him but you do sort of understand.... We went down for [the sentencing] as well. But they never talk, and they never look at you. You really want to get inside and see what these people are like. So meeting him for me helped. It did help. [Participant 6]*

## Parole hearings

FSWs said that families were notified of forthcoming parole hearings by the Victim Notification system. FSWs were notified of parole hearings through the Victim Notification system only if the victim noted this on the Victim Notification Register. Otherwise, families might contact the FSW once they received the notification.

Families said they found it hard when the notification came earlier than expected. FSWs prepared them for the possible first parole hearing, spoke to them about parole submissions, the option of meeting with the parole board or making a submission in writing, and the process. One family member made contact with Victim Support for the first time when notified of a parole hearing.

*[The FSW] rang me and told me who she was, and that she could help me – because this was all new to me, parole hearings. I didn't know what I had to do. So she sort of coached me through what was going to happen. They will send out information. I can give a written or oral submission to the parole board. If I needed assistance from Victim Support – and she gave me an example of assistance with travel, food and accommodation – if it was somewhere else in the country. So I thought oh wow. That is great. [Participant 28]*

### **Perceived strengths of the FSW role in the criminal justice process**

Court Victim Advisers, Police and the Homicide Support team said that the FSW role empowered family members to be part of the criminal justice process and represented their rights to be involved in a way that was meaningful for them. Families could be confident that they were well informed and prepared.

*[Families] can rest easy knowing there will be no surprises.... - they know what's happening and why – they may not agree but they understand. [Police]*

The consistency of the role meant that the FSW had built rapport with the family before the case came to trial and this gave families a sense of security with the process.

Court victim advisers saw the FSWs as very committed to standing alongside families through the process.

*The thing that strikes me immediately about [the FSW] is her full on commitment to do whatever she needs to do, so that could be picking them up to bring them to court, going and getting them a cup of coffee from the caravan across the way from the courthouse, minding a child while somebody goes to the toilet. Anything that needs to be done she does. [Court Victim Advisor]*

Court Victim Advisers said that the FSWs were becoming known to others in the court environment.

*So [the FSW's] presence is kind of the beacon to everybody in the court that that [it] is family members of a homicide. It is fantastic for everybody. [Court Victim Advisor]*

Police said that having the family well supported by a dedicated FSW freed Police to manage other aspects of the trial, such as interacting with other witnesses.

*So having someone that that is their full time job, there are some real benefits there for us in terms of actually being able to concentrate on actually managing the trial as opposed to*

*looking after the victim's families. Sometimes we are talking 20 or 30 people that are there as part of the victims' families to sort of manage. So that is invaluable. [Police]*

Family members appreciated the FSW, Crown prosecutor and Police working together during the trial.

*I tell you what; the whole four of them were absolutely fantastic to us. They really were. [Participant 6]*

### **Perceived challenges of the FSW role in the criminal justice process**

The main challenge perceived by the Homicide Support Team, Police, and Court Victim Advisers was FSWs finding time to stay with families through the process, particularly when there were several trials or homicides happening simultaneously, or when the FSW was sick or on leave. Finding a volunteer homicide support worker to sit with families throughout a trial was also difficult as few had the required weeks of time to give.

### **Summary: Support through the criminal justice process**

The findings show that FSWs play a comprehensive role in supporting families at all stages of the long and complex criminal justice process. The rapport and trust FSWs had already established with family members was particularly important at difficult points of the process. Families found the help of the FSW in preparing a Victim Impact Statement allowed them to participate in a way that was beneficial to them. Family members were seen to be confident in their understanding of the process because of the FSW support. Committing time to provide support throughout the course of a long trial was a challenge.

## 8 Service quality

### Service expectations

The Pilot Evaluation Framework (Ministry of Justice 2015) for this evaluation states that the following outcomes are sought in terms of a quality service.

- Service users feel their caseworkers were easy to relate to and communicate with.
- Service users feel their caseworkers were caring, culturally sensitive and not judgemental.
- Service users feel their caseworkers were professional and responsive.
- Service users feel their caseworkers were helpful and always acted in their best interests.
- Service users feel that the support received from their caseworkers was tailored to their particular needs, and more than just a standard level of service.
- Stakeholders feel confident that caseworkers are well trained, reliable, approachable, and make a positive contribution to the overall welfare of service users.

### How service quality was perceived in the pilot

Family members, counsellors, Court Victim Advisors, Crown Prosecutors and Police were all very positive about the quality of service given by FSWs and most gave glowing accounts. They said FSWs were:

#### Caring

*She is a lovely lady. But as I say, she is not only a Victim Support lady but she has become a personal friend of mine now. She is really really caring. She is a real mother you know. When she leaves she gives me a little cuddle and kiss. She is just so nice. Don't ever let her go because she is really really suited for her job. [Participant 7]*

*There has always been huge gratitude, an awe that this is available, a thankfulness, and just an acknowledgement that when everything turned to custard caring people were there. [Counsellor]*

#### Professional

*I get the sense that they advocate positively for our role. They have a clear sense of the boundaries in the extension of our role and how far it can go. [Court Victim Adviser]*

*[The FSW] did what we would hope someone in that role did, which is doesn't get too emotionally involved in the situation but can sort of keep that professional detachment and that was good. [Crown prosecutor]*

*[The FSW] must be the best time manager known to man; we ask a lot of her and she continues to deliver.... She manages a high workload efficiently – her work doesn't become shoddy. [Police]*



## **Responsive**

*She is onto it straight away. She doesn't muck around or say I will get back to you. If she says I will get back to you, she is back to you within the hour. [Participant 17]*

*She is a wonderful lady. I remember once after hours.... I left a message there and she rang back. I always say I am sorry to ring you at this time, I know it is after hours, but I just need a bit of support. She spoke to me and helped me. [Participant 19]*

*She has just been fantastic.... She has been there all the time. She has always been a phone call away.... She said if you need me, ring me. Don't be afraid to ring. That is what I am there for. Ring me. No matter what time. I said to her 'do you have life?' We got to know her, and it was really lovely. So any questions at all and she was there. She goes 'pick that phone up and ring'. [Participant 2]*

*She has worked tirelessly really to be fair. She seems to be working all hours. She works hard. Nothing is ever a problem to get hold of her. She is always very pleasant to deal with. She is really the perfect person for the job. There are just so many things to say that we have talked about. Just keeping us informed of what is going on and when. Just being able to answer any questions which we may have had at times. [Participant 9]*

*They seem to be able to make themselves available whatever time it is. Or if a family wants to have a meeting and it is the only time they can get together due to work, they are quite happy to schedule it outside of hours. [Police]*

## **Able to build rapport / easy to communicate with**

*She doesn't know me from a bar of soap but I do feel comfortable to speak with her. She is not threatening, and she didn't come across as threatening. Her whole manner was very relaxed, friendly, and she encouraged you. Anything we can do. So you kind of opened up a bit more to her, rather than a phone call..... I think to be honest if she hadn't have come out there is no way I would have divulged probably half the stuff. [Participant 3]*

*I feel really good after I talked to her. I feel good when I talk to her. Because I did think a lot of bad things.... [it] made me feel like she is my sister or my mother. That is what it made me feel like. [Participant 19]*

*[The FSW] had a good rapport... She had a very good manner and was very good with them.... I think [she] got on well with them and was very empathetic. [Crown prosecutor]*

## **Competent**

*She was a good listener and seemed to understand. She was intelligent. [Participant 14]*

*She showed a really good understanding of I guess what messages should be going to them and what shouldn't at this stage, and why. Where we are going and how the*

*process works.... I suppose it is like having an expert, rather than someone who is just well trained. [Police]*

### **Offering tailored support**

*She has really been supportive. She has helped us to find out different ways we can help ourselves. [Participant 26]*

*A great amount of empathy. Welcoming hugs, farewell hugs, sort of thing. It just made us feel it wasn't just a Joe Bloggs from Victim Support. It was someone that was interested in our family and interested in our family's needs and feelings. [Participant 15]*

*Everybody just really loves it when she makes contact. They go to her when they need something. They know that they are going to get heard. They know that they are going to be attended to. [Counsellor]*

### **Culturally responsive**

Stakeholders for all three FSWs had observed the FSWs showing cultural sensitivity and operating with cultural appropriateness in their casework. Most stakeholders in Auckland and Counties Manukau spoke of the ethnic diversity within the Auckland region, with well over 100 ethnic groups present in the community.

Court Victim Advisors observed that the court environment could be somewhat insensitive to cultural needs and they had observed the FSWs advocating for families' cultural needs within the court environment. For example, they ensured there was space for large families to gather and eat together.

Language issues were also common. While interpreters were provided for the court process, they were not available to family members for their meetings with the Crown prosecutor and Police. The Homicide Support Team said that Victim Support were intentionally recruiting volunteer support workers from a range of ethnic groups so that they were able to bring in language and cultural support when needed. FSWs also drew on the help of Police Ethnic Liaison Officers for families from specific ethnic groups. This was particularly helpful when phone calls were needed to immediate family living overseas. Sometimes families asked their children to act as interpreters, but this was not ideal. The government's Language Line was sometimes used.

FSWs stated that they were guided by families as to their spiritual and cultural needs particularly around their wishes in relation to the body of the deceased. Families had sometimes called in leaders from their own community or religion at the time of crisis. FSWs also built up their own networks of support people from different ethnic groups in their communities. The Police Ethnic Liaison Officers also made the FSWs aware of any specific protocols relating to their ethnic group.

## **Māori and Pacific family members' experience of the FSW service**

In the evaluation framework (Ministry of Justice 2015) for this project evaluators were asked to investigate whether there were any disparities for Māori /Pasifika in take-up or outcome.

Victim Support senior managers referred to the General Manager Māori, Pacific and Ethnic Communities whose role was to implement the Māori, Pacific and Ethnic Community strategy within the organisation. This involved the Te Whare Tapa Whā practice model which provided a holistic service. It also involved the recruitment of Māori and Pacific volunteer support workers and ensuring training programmes were aligned with the strategy.

The Māori and Pasifika specialists on the evaluation team have summarised the main themes for Māori and Pasifika family members who were interviewed for the evaluation. These summaries are presented here.

## **The main themes from interviews with Māori family members**

### **Findings from analysis of the interview data**

An additional analysis of interviews with eight Māori participants was conducted to identify themes relevant to their experience of the Homicide Family Support Worker service. The following sections present the themes and consider broader aspects of life for many Māori family groups and whānau. These points have been highlighted as they identify challenges for the delivery of Homicide Family Support Workers to some Māori whānau.

### **General overview of Māori participants of services received**

All of the participants felt positive about the services they received from the FSW. They appreciated the support, information, guidance with the justice system, and the access to the grants for travel, accommodation and meals. Support services with counselling were also appreciated, although not all participants had felt that they needed access to counselling.

An important aspect of the participants' positive experiences appeared to be the very strong relationship they were able to establish with the FSW. Within this close working relationship, communication with the FSW was sustained over time during which they were able to obtain the information, resources and access to counselling services.

For a few participants, maintenance of a strong relationship across all members of their large whānau was problematic (see more below under 'Working with large family and whānau groups').

### **Cultural Needs**

Cultural needs have not been defined within the work of the FSWs and they were not defined for the evaluation. Each participant was asked about whether they felt that their cultural needs were met. This left them to respond to that question in light of their own knowledge and understanding of what cultural needs meant for them.

When asked about their cultural needs being met, Māori participants felt that their cultural needs were met by the FSW, or they felt that they did not have any cultural needs with regard to the homicide incident. Generally, it appeared that the homicide incident was not regarded as related to their cultural needs, although they appreciated having their cultural needs considered by the FSW.

One participant described how the FSW worked to organise numerous whānau hui for all members of his whānau (reportedly 20-30 people). These hui enabled them to meet together with the FSW and New Zealand Police staff to hear all of the relevant information about their case. They were all encouraged to ask any questions and make sure that they understood the information that was being presented to them. This participant felt that being able to come together has been a very important step for his whānau so that they could deal with the consequences of the incident as one whānau. Having hui meant that for this whānau, the information sharing process was simplified and it meant that all of the whānau members were able to hear the appropriate information.

*I believe it should be done like that. Meetings with the whole family concerned, because it is coming from Victim Support and not from the individual (family) mouths. Because you will get different stories like I told you this, and then somebody will have a different story. But listening to Victim Support when they are there, and there is no comeback on anybody.*

This participant also felt that counselling needs were met by his family members being part of this process. They were able to share their grief and discuss their feelings in a private and supported way during these hui.

Cultural needs were seen by one participant as not being as urgent as needing support in the immediate aftermath of the homicide. She and other participants did appreciate being asked if they would prefer to work with a Māori counsellor. Most of the participants considered that their family and whānau members provided their cultural support.

One participant believed that members of her whānau who travelled to attend a court hearing could have benefited from being accommodated at a marae instead of in a hotel. She felt that gathered together in a marae environment could have better facilitated the family members sharing and discussing the situation for them. While this suggestion has some merit it would need to be considered carefully before being put into practice.

### **Working with large family and whānau groups**

This item emerged from the analysis of participant interviews as an area of attention as participants identified unmet need. Four of the Māori participants interviewed talked about the task of coping with members of the different family groups in their large whānau which raised challenges for them. Most of them had family members living in other areas which added to the complexity for the FSW to establish and maintain contact with all of the primary family members. There were also additional aspects to this contact that are dealt with below under *Working with different Māori life realities*.

Family members of all homicide victims are considered the service users for the Homicide Family Support Worker. The participant mentioned above, included between 20-30 members of their whānau in the whānau hui convened to hear and discuss information from the FSW and Police. Another participant said their whānau included ten siblings in total, plus all of their children, and another participant said their whānau had seven siblings.

One participant felt that some of their younger family members had needed access to counselling but had not managed to receive that at the time of the interview. The process to negotiate the counselling between the participant's niece and the FSW appeared to have been inhibited by the lack of contact and relationship that these members of the whānau had with the FSW. There appeared to be a practical challenge for some whānau members to establish a close working relationship with the FSW as they were one step removed. In the case of this particular whānau, the participant was the go-between, maintaining contact with the FSW and conveying the information to members of the whānau. While this mode of information sharing appeared to suit most members of their whānau, it was not beneficial with regard to the younger members of the whānau accessing relevant support services.

### **Working with different life realities of Māori family and whānau**

There is no one Māori life reality for whānau in today's society and this was reflected across the interviews with Māori participants. The impacts of colonising activities has led to Māori whānau experiencing different life realities and with these realities are different whānau and hapu structures, different levels of Māori community participation, different structures of leadership and Māori cultural knowledge, different ways of experiencing Māori spiritual and Christian beliefs and different ways of relating to being Māori. The participants interviewed in this project appear to represent a range of Māori life realities.

From the interviews it appears that the FSWs have worked very flexibly with each of the families and this approach has taken account of most of the differences in life realities. There are however, some aspects of working with Māori across different life realities which may benefit from closer consideration. This is particularly, if this service is to be expanded, with more FSWs having to deal with the differences across Māori life realities.

Four Māori participant whānau can be included as examples for consideration of different life realities and the different things that need to be taken into account. Considering different Māori life realities is a large topic to cover, the example of leadership within family and whānau groups can be used to illustrate how different Māori life realities can be recognised and worked with in service delivery. With clear, strong leadership in family and whānau groups, a FSW will have access to provide services. Where leadership is not as clear or strong, a FSW's access could be enhanced with support of a family, community advocate.

### **Leadership**

Leadership within whānau was a theme that emerged from the interviews as being an indicator of how a family, whānau group functions. Understanding the different patterns could assist a FSW in their work with each whānau. Historically, leadership within Māori whānau and hapū was based upon whakapapa, genealogy, with leadership roles setting a

place and function within each whānau and hapū. With urbanisation and the breakdown of Māori cultural communities and many whānau having far less active participation in cultural communities, leadership roles have assumed a different function and meaning for many. Each of the following participant whānau reflected their own understanding and place of leadership in their whānau.

One whānau had retained their whakapapa structure and function which meant that the participant was identified as the *tuakana* for the whānau. This means that he was the senior member and had the role to lead the members of the different family groups in his whānau through the aftermath of the homicide incident. The FSW was able to use his leadership role for the benefit of all involved to convey information, make use of a hui process in which the whānau members were able to deal with the huge family disruption and apparent relationship betrayal. Each hui created its own therapeutic environment in which the whānau members could start to heal. This whānau was open to sharing and working together as a collective group.

Another whānau had established their own leadership with the eldest sibling having the senior leadership role. However, the members of the different family groups in this whānau were not open to sharing and were not open to working as a collective group. Establishing therapeutic relationships across this whānau was not possible for the FSW and the wife of the eldest sibling was the go-between. The siblings of this whānau were close but did not share and were not prepared to work together for the well-being of whānau members. This style of family function, while it worked well and was supportive for the siblings, also inhibited recognition of younger members of the whānau and their access to services.

Leadership for a third whānau in this group had been undertaken by the participant even though he was not the eldest sibling, but was the one in the family who was willing to take on this role. This participant had struggled with the role of leadership, but this seemed to stem from the lack of support from other members of his family group rather than an unwillingness to undertake the role. This family had been disconnected from the hapū and marae base with the participant having been raised in an urban centre. As a consequence broader whānau support was limited making leadership difficult and decision making that goes with family leadership difficult. One of the biggest difficulties for this participant was the isolation from their cultural community and the depth of understanding and back-up that can be garnered from the relationships in that community. This participant was open to finding some support but did not know where to find it or how to go about finding it.

The fourth participant to be included in this group described his life experience of being a former gang member. His life experience provided this participant with particular insights into the situation that the members of his family and wider whānau were going through. These insights helped him take on the leadership role for not only his smaller family group but also for other members of his whānau and helped them to access relevant services.

Where leadership was in place and functioned well, and the leader of that whānau was recognised and supported in accessing the necessary services, service delivery worked well and effectively. Where whānau leadership was less clear, FSW service delivery was not as

well coordinated across a whole whānau, but catered to either individuals or groups of individuals within the different family groups of a whānau.

### **Overall comments**

Generally, Māori participants spoke positively about the services they received from the FSWs. The emotional, practical and financial support was greatly appreciated and eased the pressure at a highly charged time.

While “cultural needs” were not defined at all, the Māori participants stated that their cultural needs were met, with one describing that it was more important to her to ensure her emotional needs were met before her cultural needs.

A suggestion was made for whānau to use a marae as accommodation instead of their using a hotel when they need to attend court hearings at a different locality. While this suggestion may be possible to implement, it does raise some questions. First, when marae are hired out, the hapū/organising committee usually expect that the group staying at the marae will cater for themselves. If VS used a marae to accommodate a whānau this aspect would need to be considered and negotiated with the hapū hiring out the marae. Secondly, most marae do not allow use of drugs or alcohol on their premises. This rule would have to be adhered to by whānau staying at the marae.

Large and complex whānau groups pose challenges for a Family Support Worker to establish close working relationships with all members of family and whānau groups. The FSWs use a complex genealogy grid to ensure that all family members in a whānau are identified to ensure they have access to services if and when they are needed. However, with some of the large whānau, the FSW is not able to establish therapeutic connections with all of the members of the family group within a whānau. Where someone feels less confident they are more inhibited in following up services they may need. This is an area that needs further consideration for development or improvement. In this I am considering the children of the siblings of a homicide victim as part of the primary family group. Whānau that tend to be more closed could indicate that some whānau members may need access to services. To reach these individuals the FSWs will need to be able to establish contact and develop a close working relationship with these family members to help them find the services they need. Making contact with these individuals may need extra time and effort, or there may need to be an intermediary who can breach the perceived barriers in the family and whānau.

Different life realities for members of Māori family and whānau groups is an area that is not always well understood but is one that was clear across the participant families. Leadership within family group and across whānau is one way of identifying how well connected they are; that is amongst themselves as a whānau group, but also how well connected they are to their cultural community. Strong connection to their cultural community provides an indication of the level of support the family members can receive, and also the level of response for additional guidance and direction they could be forthcoming when needed. Where leadership is not strong in family and whānau groups, it is likely that they are not as well connected to their cultural community. They are also likely to have few supports with

less availability of guidance and direction. It is these families for whom access to extra support and advocacy are needed. This may require more FSWs be available to meet the needs of large Māori family groups. Finding this type of homicide support and advocacy for a Māori family and whānau group not only needs to be culturally appropriate, it also needs to recognise and work with the different Māori life realities.

### **Concluding comments**

The Homicide Family Support Worker role has reportedly been beneficial to the Māori families and whānau who took part in the evaluation interviews. Two main areas were seen as needing further development for FSWs working with family and whānau who experience different Māori life realities. Given a possible expansion of the service and the consequent uptake of services by a wider range of Māori family and whānau groups, how Family Support workers meet the diverse needs of larger family and whānau groups will need careful attention. It is suggested that the FSWs establish working relationships with Māori support organisations within their communities with the aim of obtaining support, guidance and direction with their service provision to Māori family and whānau groups.

## **The main themes from interviews with Pacific family members**

### **Background**

Integrity Professional (IPRO) was contracted to review, comment and provide advice from the perspective of Pacific users throughout the Homicide Evaluation. This involved commenting on key evaluation documents and interviewing users of the service. IPRO undertook nine interviews with service users (interviewees). Out of the nine interviews, four interviewees were of Pacific ethnicity. Two were of Fijian Indian descent and two were Samoan (one was Māori and Samoan). This report provides a brief overview of some key themes across the four interviews and also identifies some unique feedback.

### **Key Themes**

Some of the key themes that were consistent across the four Pacific interviewees included (1) no cultural support needed; (2) financial support; (3) emotional support; (4) links to other services; (5) appreciation; and (6) personnel fit.

#### ***No cultural support needed***

Interestingly all four interviewees mentioned that they were offered but did not need 'cultural support' for a number of reasons. One reason provided by an interviewee was that they had enough family around and so saw no need for cultural support. Other interviewees just explained they did not feel the need to access any cultural support.

#### ***Financial support***

Financial support was one of the key factors that all four interviewees mentioned was particularly useful about the Homicide Caseworker Support Service (the Service). Two interviewees mentioned that they had family 'back home' and that the financial support helped not only them, but also their wider family. Some examples provided by interviewees where financial support really helped included:



- flights;
- accommodation;
- petrol costs;
- court related costs;
- funeral costs; and
- travel and to and from court.

One interviewee mentioned that the Family Support Worker supported the individual to take the victim's body back to Fiji.

Another interviewee mentioned the support provided to her and her family included accessing flights for family members overseas to come to New Zealand for the funeral.

Another example provided by one of the interviewees was that part of the Muslim culture means that when there is a death, family members visit every day until the burial and pray. This process meant that this interviewee was finding it hard to accommodate family guests every day and found the financial support provided through Victim Support really helped in terms of being able to host her family appropriately – for example the ability to provide tea, coffee and food - daily.

### **Emotional support**

Interviewees consistently mentioned how accessible their FSW was and how easy it was to get hold of them and talk. For example, interviewees often referred to accessing their Case Worker after hours. This level and type of support was greatly appreciated by interviewees who often required support outside of normal working hours. Support was usually provided in the form of a face-to-face contact shortly after the homicide and subsequently in preparation for court hearings or appearances. In between these activities, support was generally provided over the phone. One interviewee met with their Case Worker a couple of times at work. Interviewees also described a high level of trust between the individual and their Homicide Case Worker which obviously facilitated a more open, frank and supportive relationship.

*..does well at her job... If that girl not there I would probably collapse. Makes me feel like she's my sister or mum. Trust! [Participant 10]*

*.. I know it's rough but at least someone is there for you. [Participant 10]*

*Great support and outstanding support and my family are very thankful she was there for us. [Participant 21]*

*..she [Family Support Worker] make me survive. [Participant 10]*

### **Links to other services**

Participants reported consistently that their Case Worker did offer counselling and other types of support. Some of the interviewees accessed counselling and they reported that the

counselling services were very helpful. The Case Workers also helped people access ACC, Work and Income (WINZ) and Immigration New Zealand.

### **Appreciation**

Another key theme that was consistent across the three Pacific interviewees was their appreciation for the support. For example, interviewees repeatedly described the tailored support that each Case Worker provided as sincere and appropriate.

*One of the best person I have met in my life. [Participant 10]*

Another interviewee expressed her thanks and that she felt lucky to be in New Zealand in terms of the support offered.

*[I am]...happy with the Government and Police.... don't have words to describe it. [Participant 19]*

*[I am] so lucky to have someone like [the FSW].... ...she helps to encourage me. [Participant 10]*

### **Personnel Fit**

Finally, interviewees felt that the Case Workers were professional, sensitive and caring at a very difficult time in their lives. They reported that the Case Workers were 'right for the job' and agreed the Workers were competent.

*She is the right person for job.... liike a very close friend. [Participant 10]*

*...she's very helpful...whenever I ask for help...she always there... she is always there for you when you need it. [Participant 21]*

*I haven't got the word for describe... [what] she is doing a lot for me... I am very happy to get a victim support like her ... she is caring a lot... not only me and my daughter... and like my mum, my niece and my sister... she was here. [Participant 19]*

*...she's a very strong foundation... my daughter and I are very much alone...sometimes I don't miss my family just because of [the FSW]... [Participant 19]*

One interviewee reported that their FSW was a good communicator and she was competent.

*"down to earth", "easy to talk to", caring and empathetic and sympathetic". [Participant 21]*

### **Unique Feedback**

In addition to the key themes that were consistent across the four Pacific interviews, there were two pieces of unique feedback that are worth noting.

Firstly, one interviewee mentioned that the only aspect of the service that could have been improved, was support for her sister who lost a lot financially. The homicide in this case happened in a market rental property that her sister was renting and her sister lost a lot of money. The family perceived that the process to go through their private rental property

manager in order to access funding to purchase new furniture and toys etc... was too arduous.

*...they said you have to go to the court or claim the people... from [rental property manager] but then my daughter said it's too much hassle they aren't going to pay...it was only that otherwise everything else was good...so she lost \$2,000 there and her living things. [Participant 20]*

Secondly, another interviewee mentioned that he was keen to attend more group meetings for victims. He expressed that these meetings were very helpful in hearing and sharing stories similar to his.

*[The group meetings were] a lot of help to see other people who were going through what we are going through. [Participant 21]*

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Pacific interviewees expressed that the service provided was appropriate, tailored to their needs, practical and useful. Interestingly, the interviewees felt no need for cultural support - possibly because they had such a high level support from their FSWs. Financial and emotional support was reported consistently across the interviewees as a positive and beneficial. Links to other services and a deep appreciation and sense of gratitude were also consistently mentioned in interviews. Interviewees felt the workers were the right 'fit' for the role and delivered a high quality service that met their needs at a very difficult time in their lives. Two pieces of unique feedback on how to improve the service included (1) improving existing processes (and 'paper work') for families where a homicide may have taken place in a private rental so that they can access funding to purchase new furniture etc...; and (2) facilitate greater access to 'group meetings'. In summary, interviewees reported a high level of satisfaction of the type and extent of service provided by the Victim Support Homicide Case Workers.

## **Summary: Quality of service**

Evaluation participants reported that the FSWs were caring, professional, accessible, able to build rapport, and were competent. FSWs were also reported to be culturally responsive in working with families of a range of ethnicities.

Māori family and whānau participants spoke positively about the services they received from the FSWs. The emotional, practical and financial support was greatly appreciated and eased the pressure at a highly charged time. The Māori participants stated that their cultural needs were met.

The Pacific interviewees expressed that the service provided was appropriate, tailored to their needs, practical and useful. The interviewees felt no need for specific cultural support - possibly because they had such a high level of support from their FSWs. A deep appreciation and sense of gratitude were also consistently mentioned in interviews.

## **9 Organisational support for the Family Support Worker**

The Victim Support CEO stated that the FSWs were supported within a formal framework including position descriptions, recruitment criteria, training, supervision, performance monitoring and professional development.

### **Training and induction**

#### **Training and induction provided**

The Homicide Support Service has developed a two day training programme for Service Co-ordinators, and a three day introductory programme and on-going training programme for voluntary homicide support workers. The service also distributes newsletters with new resources and articles to update volunteers.

At the inception of the pilot the three FSWs underwent a two week training and induction period. The first week was spent at Victim Support National Office. As well as an introduction to Victim Support, this introduced the service delivery pathway and expectations for case management, as well as the criminal justice process. Representatives spoke on the roles of Police and parole and two family members of homicide victims spoke with them.

Following this, local induction included visits to the Service Co-ordinators, CIB units in each police station within the area, and the Court Victim Advisors. The Auckland FSW who commenced work mid-way through the pilot period also spent a day with the FSWs in Christchurch and Counties Manukau.

Quarterly meetings are scheduled for the three FSWs and the HSSs to share information, reflect on practice, and learn more about topics such as types of counselling, case noting, time management and self-care.

FSWs could also participate in generic training workshops on particular topics organised by Victim Support for staff and volunteers. Examples of topics useful to the FSWs included restorative justice, mental health advocacy, and preparing Victim Impact Statements.

#### **Strengths and areas for strengthening**

FSWs stated that the initial training had been very intense. On reflection this introduction, coupled with learning 'on the job' and their willingness to seek out information they needed meant that the overall training and induction had been worthwhile. They said the quarterly team meetings and the support of the HSSs were particularly helpful for their learning.

Victim Support senior management, HSSs and FSWs suggested that future development of FSWs could include developing a tool kit of community resources, broadening their understanding the cultural needs of specific ethnic groups, and providing more professional development opportunities in general. Additional professional development for the HSSs to support them in their staff management and coaching role was also thought to be important.

## **Supervision and support**

The Homicide Support Service is overseen by the Manager Specialist Services who manages the HSSs. They in turn manage and supervise the FSWs. As well as having a line management role, HSSs debrief and coach the FSWs on a frequent basis. The Auckland FSW and HSS are co-located so have frequent face to face contact. In the other areas contact is more frequently by phone.

The HSSs said that the main function of their debriefing and coaching was case management, working on support plans and finding ways of meeting families' needs. However the debriefs were also a check on time management and self-care, when it was appropriate to disengage, and the manageability of the FSW's case load. It was also important to plan ahead for any FSW absences to ensure the needs of vulnerable families would continue to be met.

The HSSs also monitor the FSW's case work through the case recording system and through the Victim Assistance Scheme (funding) applications. The HSSs carry out a further quality check by interviewing two to four victims' family members each year.

External supervision is organised with experienced supervisors and takes place six weekly to three monthly. This was to make sure FSWs stayed emotionally and mentally healthy and to help ensure that FSWs were not becoming over-involved in or affected by cases.

The quarterly meetings of the Homicide Support team (FSWs and HSSs) also provided an opportunity for peer supervision through reflecting on practice with specific cases. Both FSWs and HSSs said a range of support and supervision is important as the role requires intense involvement with some complex family situations.

## **Strengths of supervision and support**

The FSWs said that their relationships with the HSSs were a strength to the role. FSWs appreciated the depth of communication, experience, knowledge, responsiveness, sound advice and supportive coaching style of the HSSs. The good working relationships had enabled the FSWs to develop their skills and gain confidence in making decisions.

## **Resourcing for the role**

The Victim Support CEO said that the overall budget for the pilot had not been based on a business case and that the organisation had 'made it fit'. The learning from the evaluation would be helpful in developing a detailed business case to take the service into the future. The evaluation has considered resourcing for the role in terms of office accommodation, transport, workloads, and remuneration.

## **Office accommodation**

Senior managers explained that Victim Support was to a large extent dependent NZ Police for office accommodation for staff. In Christchurch the FSW is located with other Victim Support personnel in an open plan office in the temporary Central Police Station. The accommodation had the advantage of allowing easy liaison with CIB staff. In Counties

Manukau the FSW was well accommodated in a dedicated office in the Manukau Police Station where the CIB were located. However all homicide trials were conducted in the Auckland High Court in central Auckland, up to an hour's drive away. The Auckland FSW was located at the Otahuhu Police Station which was outside the area she served. However the Auckland CIB were located in several Police Stations within the Auckland district and it was an advantage to be co-located with the HSS. A Christchurch Police interviewee suggested that improved accommodation for Victim Support personnel should be part of the planning for the new Christchurch Justice Precinct.

## Transport

**Table 10: The total kilometres travelled by FSWs conducting support actions at each pilot site from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015**

Pilot Site	Kilometres
Auckland FSW	2034
Counties Manukau FSW	5202
Christchurch FSW	2469
Total	<b>9705</b>

All Victim Support staff who were interviewed thought that the provision for transport for FSWs was unsatisfactory. FSWs used their own cars for home visits, transport to meetings with other service providers, and transport to court. Although reimbursed with a mileage allowance, FSWs said this was not sufficient to cover wear and tear on their cars. Moreover because the reimbursement was paid in arrears, FSWs could be up to \$500 out of pocket each month. FSWs would prefer to have a debit card for fuel and have a car allowance paid with their salaries.

## Hours of work, workloads and caseloads

Table 11 shows the FSW caseloads as at 30 June 2015. Table 12 below shows the number of support actions per month, as an indicator for changing workloads.

**Table 11: FSW cases as at 30/6/15**

Pilot site	Active	Reopened	Total
Auckland FSW	62	4	66
Counties Manukau FSW	47	8	55
Christchurch FSW	59	12	71
Total	168	24	<b>192</b>

**Table 12: The number of support actions per month by the FSWs at each pilot site from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015**

Site	7/14	8/14	9/14	10/14	11/14	12/14	1/15	2/15	3/15	4/15	5/15	6/15
<b>AKL</b>	50	29	-	186	293	267	337	327	317	281	243	216
<b>CM</b>	223	260	303	315	312	243	96	204	299	249	291	280
<b>CHCH</b>	158	172	150	149	130	140	183	205	146	249	197	238
<b>Total</b>	431	461	453	650	735	736	616	736	762	779	731	734

Senior managers, HSSs and FSWs said that caseloads and workloads of the FSWs in Auckland and Counties Manukau were high and difficult to manage. Generally there was a high number of homicides in the two districts. As a service that provides a crisis response it was impossible to predict when periods of high demand would occur. The first week after a homicide and the period immediately prior to a trial were the times of most intensive need for the families and these times of need could occur simultaneously over several cases.

HSSs said that periods of high demand were managed by allocating some cases or support tasks to volunteer homicide support workers. However volunteers who had homicide training were scarce and not available in all areas. Providing support to families through a trial was particularly time intensive and it wasn't realistic to ask volunteers to be available continuously for long periods.

The caseload in Christchurch had been more manageable although was also vulnerable to times of high demand. However all FSWs spoke of difficulties managing the workload and frequently worked in excess of a 40 hour week. Because FSWs offered a crisis response service hours needed to be flexible and FSWs frequently worked in evenings and weekends. While hours were carefully recorded and time in lieu taken, it was not easy to find periods when time off was possible.

One HSS suggested that a team of three FSWs covering Auckland and Counties Manukau would be ideal. Another suggested a dedicated court support team would also be ideal to relieve time pressure and ensure families' needs for support were met.

### **Remuneration**

At the commencement of the pilot FSW remuneration had been set at a level commensurate with other similar roles in the organisation. However it was the view of the FSWs and HSSs that now that the full scope of the role was apparent a review of the remuneration level was warranted. Aspects of the role which they did not believe were reflected in the salary level were the skills and experience FSWs brought to the role, the level of case management required, the responsibility for inter-agency liaison, and the need for flexible work hours.

## **Case recording**

The VIVA case management recording system developed for Victim Support is set up on a web-based platform originally developed for business, but adapted and specifically designed to meet Victim Support case recording needs. Its main purpose is to support case management so that a record is kept of all victims and family members supported, their needs, actions taken in response to those needs, and interactions with other agencies. Every contact is case noted. This ensures that staff in the organisation who need to know the progress on specific cases have ready access to that information.

The system is also used as a quality assurance, performance monitoring and accountability tool. HSSs must review and approve every entry by FSWs and this provides a basis for coaching and performance conversations.

FSWs said that case recording takes a significant amount of their time. Learning to use the system was also time consuming in the first months in the role. An HSS said that it would be helpful if the purposes of the system were clarified as she felt more information was recorded than was necessary. However HSSs did find the system useful in their role of providing oversight of all homicide cases. FSWs said the system also helped to refresh their memory about specific cases prior to making contact with families.

The analysis of VIVA data for this evaluation has shown that in some areas the VIVA data does not reliably translate to monitoring statistics for the service. This is because the data base was not primarily set up for this purpose. For example, there are inconsistencies in the interpretation of data to be entered into closed fields which are the basis of the statistical data. There is also substantial missing data, particularly in relation to demographic information about the victims.

## **Summary: Organisational support for the Family Support Worker**

FSWs largely found their initial training coupled with on-going opportunities for development and networking sufficient for their needs. They were also satisfied with their supervision arrangements. Areas in which further review could be considered are workloads, FSW transport arrangements, remuneration and the FSW accommodation in Christchurch. The purposes of the case recording system could be clarified and steps taken to ensure it meets the range of purposes that are expected of it.



## 10 Perceived strengths and impacts of the service

All stakeholders and family members identified strengths and positive impacts of the homicide caseworker service. Strengths were seen to be the consistency of the service, the specialised nature of the service, the independence of the service, the qualities of the individual FSWs, and a perceived improvement in Victim Support's service to homicide victims' families. Stakeholders and families said that the service impacted positively on the confidence and empowerment of victims' families within the justice system, on families' journey to recovery, and on other services in the criminal justice system.

### Perceived strengths of the service

#### Single point of contact and consistency of service

Police, Crown prosecutors, Court Victim Advisors and Victim Support staff said that having a dedicated role for meeting the needs of homicide victims' families meant that there was a single point of contact for families and other services working with them from the initial crisis through the long criminal justice system process. Some described this as a 'wrap around service' linking relevant services together for the benefit of the family members. This helped families engage with the multiple services they needed to engage with throughout the process and the FSW became a familiar and reassuring face through a complex and traumatic time. A family member said:

*[The FSW] has been absolutely amazing. I honestly couldn't praise her enough for what she has done for me and my family in the hardest three years in our lives. [Participant 23]*

#### The specialised nature of the service

Police and Court Victim Advisors acknowledged that the FSWs had greater expertise than they did in meeting homicide victims' families' needs. FSWs had knowledge of the support agencies and practical assistance available to families that other roles didn't have. It was also reassuring that the FSWs had the expertise to deal with the emotional and traumatic effects of the homicide.

Some Police saw the FSW as a 'subject matter expert' from whom they could learn. While Police appointed a Family Liaison Officer for a homicide case, this detective could be carrying out multiple roles on the case and elsewhere within Police and generally lacked the specialised knowledge necessary to meet many of the families' needs. The FSWs were also seen as more specialised than other Victim Support workers. A family member said:

*I am glad that they were focussed on homicide and not victims per se.... Homicides are homicides. Other things are other things. I mean we are top of the chain. So they weren't mixing up everything. [Participant 14]*

#### The independence of the service

Crown prosecutors and Police appreciated the independence of the service from their roles which worked to different objectives within the justice system. It was particularly important

that FSWs could emphasise this when working with families who did not wish to have a relationship with Police.

Family members also appreciated having someone independent of the family alongside them.

*I kind of feel that [the FSW] was our back bone.... I was thinking about this last night. When you have family.... but sometimes you just needed someone who wasn't family to be there, and she was that person 100%.... because I don't want to burden people with how I feel, because they are struggling too. I think well gosh, just to have that person that I could go to and say look I feel like this today. [Participant 26]*

### **The exceptional qualities of the individual FSWs**

Police, counsellors, Court Victim Advisors and family members praised the exceptional qualities of all four individuals<sup>14</sup> who have been in the FSW role. They spoke of the caring, sensitive and skilled way they related to people from a wide range of backgrounds, ages and ethnicities. They also spoke of their passion for the role and their willingness to give more than was expected to the role. Victim Support senior managers described them as a 'high performing' team. Stakeholders said;

*I just think she is an exceptional person you have got there, and she does the service really well. She is a wonderful ambassador for it. [Counsellor]*

*Also the way she portrayed herself worked. She was knowledgeable, had life experience, she was empathetic, she was non-judgemental. More than willing to help. [Police]*

Family members said:

*She is the man. I like her. She is cool. And professional as. She is mean.... She is the best one.... She is good. I am glad we got her. [Participant 30]*

*I feel so blessed that we actually did get [FSW]. Because sometimes you click with people and sometimes you don't. I mean she was certainly perfect for the children and me definitely... It was a perfect match. [Participant 15]*

*She has been so fantastic. I can't praise her enough. She has been wonderful. [Participant 27]*

### **Improvement in Victim Support's service to homicide victims**

Police, Crown prosecutors, Court Victim Advisors, and the Homicide Service Specialists all saw the FSW service as a significant improvement in the service provided by Victim Support to homicide victims' families. Most were reluctant to criticise the work of the volunteer support workers, but felt that factors inherent in a voluntary service meant it was not possible

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<sup>14</sup> In Auckland the initially appointed FSW had resigned and a new appointment had been made by the time of the evaluation.

to provide the quality of service provided by the full time dedicated FSWs. They said this was because:

- The voluntary service was subject to changes in personnel, were generally not engaged for the long term, and sometimes there were gaps when a voluntary homicide support worker was not able to be present
- Volunteers did not have time to gain the necessary expertise, knowledge and professionalism to support victims through the highly complex criminal process. FSWs have a deep understanding of the process from being immersed in it.
- FSWs had more flexibility around engagement with victims
- Homicide Service Specialists were able to directly manage cases rather than working through the Service Co-ordinators who managed the voluntary homicide support workers, which lengthened the process
- FSWs were able to have a proactive rather than reactive approach
- FSWs were able to spend more time than voluntary homicide support workers could spend with family members.

More than half of the family members interviewed for the evaluation had initially received service from a volunteer homicide support worker and had transitioned to the FSW once the new roles were in place. Although they were not asked directly, these family members all compared the FSW service favourably with the voluntary service and were a great deal more satisfied with the service the FSW provided. Most had engaged minimally with the volunteer support service. They engaged more readily with the FSW because they found the FSW knew more about what was available to help them, contacted them more frequently, visited them rather than only contacting them by phone, was more accessible, and was more professional. Three family members said they had pro-actively asked Victim Support to change their support worker. Family members said:

*I had a voluntary worker from Victim Support. She was a lovely lady and I know the intentions were good, but she tended to ask you things like 'are you moving on?' and I thought no the journey is just beginning. So it was quite tough. So when [the FSW] came along it was nice to have somebody whose role is professional, and she just had a bit more insight and she was able to come along and support me. [Participant 24]*

*I never got to meet [the voluntary support worker] at all. First of all they rang me from .... Police Station and we spoke on the phone and what have you. Then I went to see her, and then they had closed the .... Victim Support down. I am asking for this lady and they are going 'no, nobody with that name works here'. 'Yes she does, with Victim Support.' 'Oh no, that is not here anymore. It is in ....' Right in the beginning I was getting like you know, and I thought something is going to give soon. [Participant 25]*

*Now [the voluntary support worker] was not qualified to know what was available regarding that. They need to know exactly what is available, because I actually had to cut*

*things from the funeral because [the voluntary support worker] didn't really know how much ACC were going to pay. [Participant 14]*

*In the beginning of this we were not given enough support from the first Victim Support worker. Why would they give us a casual worker when we were going through that time? She hardly helped us. She hardly knew anything.... When I rang them and I said I wanted to speak to our Victim Support worker, they said well she is actually a casual worker. You will have to go speak to someone else. I am wondering what the hell? Why is my family getting a casual worker? [Participant 4]*

## **Perceived positive impacts of the service**

### **Victims' families are more confident and empowered**

Counsellors, Crown prosecutors, Court Victim Advisors and FSWs could see families gaining confidence within the justice system because of the support from the FSW. A Crown prosecutor observed that families with the support of the FSW were calmer in the court environment because they understood the process better and had a chance to debrief after an upsetting session. A Court Victim Advisor thought that families who had the support of an FSW had a sense that they had participated in the justice process and that justice had been done even though the outcome may not have been what they wanted. They thought that because of the FSW role, families felt they had been treated with respect and dignity through the criminal justice process. An FSW saw some families that she had worked with becoming empowered to become advocates for other families in the same situation, for example by contributing to the homicide support newsletter. Family members said:

*[The FSW] has been there 100% for when I needed her. I have never been to a murder trial if it wasn't for her, I wouldn't have made it through. [Participant 21]*

*Once [the FSW] got to know me, she understood that I want to know what is going on, I want to manage as much as I can, and I want to have as much impact as possible. [Participant 24]*

### **Families are helped in their journey to recovery**

FSWs saw vulnerable families strengthened in their journey to recovery as they were supported through the process. Family members themselves said they were stronger because of the support of the FSW.

Some family members already had complex needs which might be related or unrelated to the homicide. Helping to meet these wider needs such as access to benefits strengthened family members in their recovery.

Counsellors and Victim Support senior managers believed that helping family members in their recovery from homicide would help the community in the longer term. The FSW helped ease the trauma and destabilising effects on families of a homicide and ultimately this led to social and economic benefits for society. Family members said:

*She really did make me survive. I don't know what would have happened to me if she is not there. I would probably collapse dead because it was bad. [Participant 19]*

*What we have been through, it is insane. I don't know how we would have even got through that without her. I just can't even describe. [Participant 26]*

### **Benefits to Police, Crown prosecutors and Court Victim Advisors**

Police, Crown prosecutors and Court Victim Advisors all spoke of the benefits to their role of the FSW service.

Police said the role freed them from dealing with a lot of family issues that were not their responsibility to deal with. Because of the FSW, their role of informing victims' families of the progress of the case was carried out more consistently and Police appreciated that the FSW occasionally reminded them of their responsibilities in this area, especially when they had become distracted by a new case. The FSW had become an important part of the inquiry team and was a single point of contact for the whole team in relaying information to families. The role also enabled Police to engage with families who would otherwise have been difficult to engage with. As a result, Police felt more confident that they were fulfilling their responsibilities under the Victims' Right Act (2002). Occasionally families had praised the Police and Victim Support at the conclusion of a trial and two Police interviewees thought that this was in large part due to the work of the FSW.

Crown prosecutors said that the FSW role helped them to maintain their professional boundaries with victims' families, in that they were not acting for the family or the deceased, but for the Crown and the community and the state. They were responsible for providing information to victims' families and helping them understand the process. In the past Prosecutors had regretted that they were unable to provide the level of support that families needed and the FSW role in providing that support made the prosecutor's role easier. Prosecutors believed that the role of looking after family members in a homicide trial was a full time role and they did not have the capacity to fulfil this. A prosecutor said:

*We are not for example able to update [the family] at every court break or every lunch time, or debrief them. What does this mean and what does that mean? How is it tracking? All that sort of thing. We have done that maybe twice in the course of the week, last week. But the capacity of somebody to do that on an ongoing basis throughout a trial, and indeed through the lead up to a trial, is invaluable. [Crown prosecutor]*

Court Victim Advisors stated that their role was to advise family members on the court process and that with high caseloads involving other serious charges they did not have the capacity to meet homicide victims' families' needs for support. They could not for example provide support throughout the course of a trial and with the FSWs in place they were confident this need was being met. Previously they had been aware that in some cases there was nobody providing that 'safety net'. FSWs took some of the load of keeping families informed and also occasionally relayed feedback from families to the Court Victim Advisors, which they found helpful.

**Summary: Perceived strengths and impacts of the service**

Perceived strengths of the service were the consistency, specialised nature and independence of the service, the qualities of the individual FSWs, and a perceived improvement in Victim Support's service to homicide victims' families. Positive impacts were seen as the empowerment of victims' families, families being helped on their journey to recovery, and benefits to Police, Court Victim Advisors, and Crown prosecutors.

## 11 Suggested improvements and perceived implications for the future

When asked about improvements that could be made to the service almost all stakeholders and family members interviewed said that the service should be expanded. Few other improvements to the service were identified. The evaluators encouraged interviewees to identify the implications of potentially expanding the service and these implications are discussed in this section.

### Support for expansion of the service

All stakeholders and families urged that the service be continued and expanded so that it was available to family members of homicide victims throughout the country. Reasons stakeholders gave for expansion were:

- The FSWs had demonstrated the provision of an expert and professional service which met the on-going needs of homicide victims' families.
- Homicide victims' families were under-represented in the justice system and were re-victimised when a poor service or no service was offered to them. Government had obligations to these victims under the Victims' Rights Act (2002).
- Current service provision to homicide victims' families was inequitable. Family members living outside the pilot areas were aware that members of the same family living in the FSW area were getting a more comprehensive service than they were.
- Expansion would enable better co-ordination and consistency of service to whole families no matter where they lived in the country or overseas.
- Expanding the full time dedicated service would benefit Victim Support by building expertise and professional development within the organisation. The depth of service provided could become a model for other services provided by the organisation.
- Provision of a quality service nationwide would enhance Victim Support's reputation with partner agencies, particularly Police, and with the general public who the organisation relied on for fundraising.
- The service needed more certainty of funding to retain skilled and high performing workers and to ensure the service was sustainable for families who needed it for long periods of time. A Crown prosecutor said:

*I would simply hope that if this is done that it is properly resourced and it is a service that is available to all families in this situation.... I am a big fan for example of it being from go to whoa, so that the support is immediately available and that it remains available right through the whole process. I mean even down to appeals which can sort of grind away after a verdict. [Crown prosecutor]*

## **Family members' suggested improvements to the service**

Individual family members would have liked more help or suggested improvements in the following areas.

- For the FSW to be able to provide direct support to a child (aged 16 or under). Because the FSW had a relationship with the child through the parent and was aware of the family background, the parent believed the help of the FSW would have benefited the child more than a specialised counsellor who would be a 'stranger'
- Help to address long standing family issues that were indirectly related to the homicide
- Advocacy with a property manager to obtain a bond and rent refund for a house that was the scene of the homicide
- In the early stages of the relationship, the family member would have preferred not to feel they were being 'managed'
- Care with transitions when an FSW resigned because the departure of an FSW was experienced as a further loss
- The re-instigation of group meetings for family members.

## **Stakeholders' suggested improvements to the service**

- Several stakeholders said that there should be more FSWs in Auckland and Counties Manukau. One suggestion was to appoint three FSWs to work within the two areas. A Police interviewee in Counties Manukau said:

*I have to say I was really surprised that it is a one person role.... That is not saying she is not doing a fabulous job. But I can just see that it is a huge job for just one person for a district that is as busy as ours. [Police]*

- Victim Support staff interviewed commonly referred to the need to improve the way transport was arranged for FSWs so that they were not carrying the cost (discussed in the section on organisational support for the FSW)
- Some Victim Support managers suggested a review of the service's case management recording process to clarify its purposes and improve consistency of use.

## **Perceived implications for the future**

Stakeholders identified the implications of a potential future expansion of the service as the need for planning, and a need to consider the attributes to be sought in recruitment of FSWs.

### **Planning for potential expansion**

Stakeholders with a strategic role said that if the service were to be expanded this should be based on a sound business case to ensure the service was of high quality, was equitable, was sustainable, and resourced appropriately. Sufficient time should be built in to plan the expansion, with particular focus on:



**How the roles were to be supported within the organisation:** while three HSSs had been line managers for the FSWs in the pilot, and the FSWs and HSSs thought that this arrangement was ideal, the implications of additional FSW roles would need to be considered for the Homicide Support Service. Training, supervision and professional development would also need to be planned, preferably with input from the current FSWs.

**How equitable geographic allocation would be achieved:** demand would need to be analysed and options developed for the allocation of FSWs to ensure a service could be provided throughout the country, particularly to rural areas and other large urban areas.

**How workloads would be allocated and managed:** the plan should draw on learnings from the pilot in establishing how workloads would be allocated and managed.

**Resourcing the roles:** the plan should draw on learnings from the pilot to identify suitable workspaces and means of transport for FSWs.

**How others in the organisation would be prepared for the new model:** once the model was agreed, communications would need to be developed to prepare the organisation for working with a 'mixed model' combining voluntary and full time support workers.

**How other agencies would be prepared for the introduction of the service:** a communications plan would also need to be developed to introduce the service to other agencies, in particular Police, Court Victim Advisors and Crown prosecutors.<sup>15</sup>

### **The ideal attributes of a FSW**

Stakeholders and family members suggested the ideal attributes that should be sought should additional FSWs be recruited. Family members suggested new FSWs should:

- Have empathy
- Be genuine, caring, understanding and warm
- Have experience working with people in crisis after tragedy
- Be strong when faced with distress
- Not be likely to get emotionally involved
- Have experience of a wide range of human nature
- Be practical and able to solve problems
- Be there for the long term
- Understand the criminal justice system
- Be qualified for the role.

Stakeholders additionally suggested that new FSWs should:

- Be resilient

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<sup>15</sup> Since the interviews took place it was also suggested that the impact on the Victim Assistance Scheme (VAS) of increasing the number of FSWs would need to be considered.

- Be calm
- Be emotionally mature
- Be able to multi-task and manage time
- Be able to relate to people from a variety of cultural backgrounds
- Be able to cope with negativity
- Have strengths and positive attributes in their own lives and characters
- Have good communication skills and be able to relate to a variety of personalities
- Understand family dynamics
- Be professional and clear about boundaries
- Have a social service background
- Be competent at administration
- Have worked in a support role.

**Summary: Suggested improvements to the service and perceived implications for the future**

Both stakeholders and family members urged that the service be expanded to be available to family members of homicide victims throughout the country. It was suggested that if the service were expanded, time should be taken to plan. An additional FSW in Counties Manukau/Auckland was also suggested.

## 12 Overall assessment and implications for the future

The pilot of the fulltime homicide caseworker support service has demonstrated the delivery of a high quality service to homicide victims' families through a traumatic time in their lives. The feedback on the service from both family members and stakeholders who participated in this evaluation has been overwhelmingly positive. These findings are in line with the findings of evaluations of similar services elsewhere (Turley et al, 2012; Van Wijk et al, 2012).

### **The service has met family members' needs**

The service has met family members' needs for information, emotional support and practical assistance. As well as advocating with Police and other services on their behalf, the service has provided families with a consistent relationship with a competent and caring person who has guided them throughout the complex criminal justice process. The service has effectively addressed the needs of homicide victims' families identified in international research, namely: help with dealing with the emotional and psychological effects of their bereavement by homicide; help with practical and domestic issues; advocacy; help in dealing with the justice system; and help in dealing with police (Metzger et al, 2015).

### **In delivering its outputs, the service aligned with expected best practice**

FSWs work with families from the post-incident period for as long as they need support. The evaluation has assessed the service through the process following a homicide, from engaging with eligible families to linking with Police and other services to supporting families through the criminal justice system. These activities can be seen as the outputs of the service. In delivering these outputs, the FSWs have aligned well with the expected best practice documented in the Homicide Service Best Practice Guideline (Victim Support, 2014).

### **FSWs had the right qualities for the role**

Evaluation participants reported that the FSWs were caring, professional, accessible, able to build rapport, and competent. FSWs were also reported to be culturally responsive in working with families of a range of ethnicities.

Māori family and whānau participants spoke positively about the services they received from the FSWs. The emotional, practical and financial support was greatly appreciated and eased the pressure at a highly charged time. The Māori participants stated that their cultural needs were met.

The Pacific interviewees expressed that the service provided was appropriate, tailored to their needs, practical and useful. The interviewees felt no need for specific cultural support - possibly because they had such a high level of support from their FSWs. A deep appreciation and sense of gratitude were also consistently mentioned in interviews.

While the FSWs have come from varying backgrounds, the qualities of the four FSWs who have been appointed to the role have been seen as 'a perfect fit'. Victim Support has successfully recruited for the positions and this recruitment ability, coupled with good training should ensure that subsequent appointees have the required qualities for the position.

### **Strengths of the service**

A strength of the service was the provision of a single and consistent point of contact to family members throughout the time their case was in the system. Some described this as a 'wrap around service' linking relevant services together for the benefit of the family members. This helped families engage with the multiple services they needed to engage with, and the FSW became a familiar and reassuring face through an otherwise confusing and difficult time.

A further strength was the specialised nature of the service. Police and Court Victim Advisors acknowledged the FSWs' expertise in meeting families' needs, particularly in dealing with the emotional and traumatic effects of homicide and knowing what practical assistance was available.

While this is not a comparative evaluation, those stakeholders and family members who had experienced the service prior to the pilot all saw the FSW service as a significant improvement in the service provided by Victim Support to homicide victims' families. There was a reluctance to criticise the volunteer support workers, yet it was thought that factors inherent in a voluntary service meant it was not possible to provide the depth of service provided by full-time dedicated FSWs. The full-time service was seen as more consistent, flexible, professional, intense and pro-active than the service that had been provided before.

### **Positive impacts / outcomes**

The service has been shown to have positive impacts or outcomes both for families who received the service and for other services within the criminal justice system. Families were found to be confident in their understanding of a difficult and complex criminal justice process. This empowered them to participate at points at which they were entitled to, such as making submissions on bail, submitting a Victim Impact Statement, participating in restorative justice meetings and making submissions to the Parole Board. In particular, the support of the FSW in preparing the Victim Impact Statement was seen to have therapeutic impacts on individuals and families.

Overall, the support of the FSW strengthened families in their journey to recovery. Some stakeholders thought that easing the trauma and destabilising effects on families of a homicide would ultimately lead to social and economic benefits for the community. This is supported by the findings from an evaluation of a similar service in the Netherlands which found that families were doing better up to three years after the crime (Van Wijk, 2012).

Police, Crown prosecutors and Court Victim Advisors found that the FSW role had positive impacts on their work. Previously Police and Crown prosecutors had been aware that within their role they were unable to inform and advise homicide victims' families' in as much depth as the families would have liked. They and Court Victim Advisors were also aware of families' unmet needs for emotional and practical support. Having these needs met by the FSW freed them to focus on their core roles while collaborating with the FSW to fulfil their obligations to homicide victims' families. Overall, the FSW role enabled a more cohesive service to homicide victims' family members.

### **Support for continuation and expansion**

There was overwhelming support for continuation and expansion of the service to other parts of the country. Expansion would:

- ensure government met its obligations to the families of homicide victims under the Victims' Rights Act (2002)
- ensure service provision to homicide victims' families was more equitable
- enable better co-ordination and consistency of service to whole families no matter where they lived
- benefit Victim Support by building expertise within the organisation
- ensure the service was sustainable for families who needed it over a long period.

### **Implications of expansion**

Strategic stakeholders identified a need for thorough planning should the service be expanded, to ensure the service was of high quality, equitable, sustainable, and resourced appropriately.

Few of those who participated in the evaluation could identify any ways that the service could be strengthened. However the evaluators have identified some areas worth considering.

- a) Because the Auckland and Counties Manukau FSWs' workloads were frequently at capacity, some eligible family members in the Auckland region were offered an alternative service. This will have resulted in an inequity of provision for families within those areas. It is suggested therefore that the number of positions within that region be reviewed or that other ways of ensuring the FSWs can work with all eligible families in their areas are considered, for example by developing alternative ways of providing support through trials at the Auckland High Court.
- b) Two main areas are seen as needing further development for FSWs working with families and whānau who experience different Māori life realities. Given a possible expansion of the service and the consequent uptake of services by a wider range of Māori family and whānau groups, how Family Support workers meet the diverse needs of larger family and whānau groups will need careful attention. Secondly, it is suggested that the FSWs establish working relationships with Māori support organisations within their communities with the aim of obtaining support, guidance and direction with their service provision to Māori family and whānau groups.
- c) The close relationships developed by the FSWs with family members were highly beneficial and a strength of the service. It is important therefore to manage any transitions in those relationships very carefully; for example when an FSW resigns this can be experienced as a further loss for a vulnerable family. Ways of reducing that sense of loss and ensuring continuity of care need to be planned well in advance of a pending departure. This was also identified as an area for development by the

Netherlands evaluation which recommended that changing caseworkers should be avoided where possible (Van Wijk, 2012).

- d) Because the service is only at the piloting stage, decisions about the resourcing that might be required for the role, such as work space, transport provision and remuneration, were based on the best assessment at the time. While the available budget was sufficient based on these assessments, now that there are some clear learnings from the pilot, it is suggested that these aspects of the resourcing of the role be reviewed and adjusted.
- e) The numeric data for the evaluation was extracted from Victim Support's VIVA case management system. This system has been used effectively as a case management and supervision tool by the FSWs and HSSs. Because FSWs have not seen the primary purpose of the data as monitoring the outputs of the service, the results show some inconsistencies so that reporting on some outputs lacks reliability. Should the service be expanded it is suggested that work is done to ensure the data is suitable for output monitoring.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the pilot has demonstrated the provision of a high quality and much needed service that is worthy of expansion to other areas of the country. Because of the service, family members of homicide victims were empowered and strengthened in their journey to recovery. The service has also given homicide victims' families a sense of being treated with respect and dignity within the criminal justice system.

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**Appendix One: Additional tables**



**Table 13: Relationship to the deceased of those supported by the FSWs and volunteer Homicide Support Workers at each pilot site from 1/7/2014 – 30/6/2015**

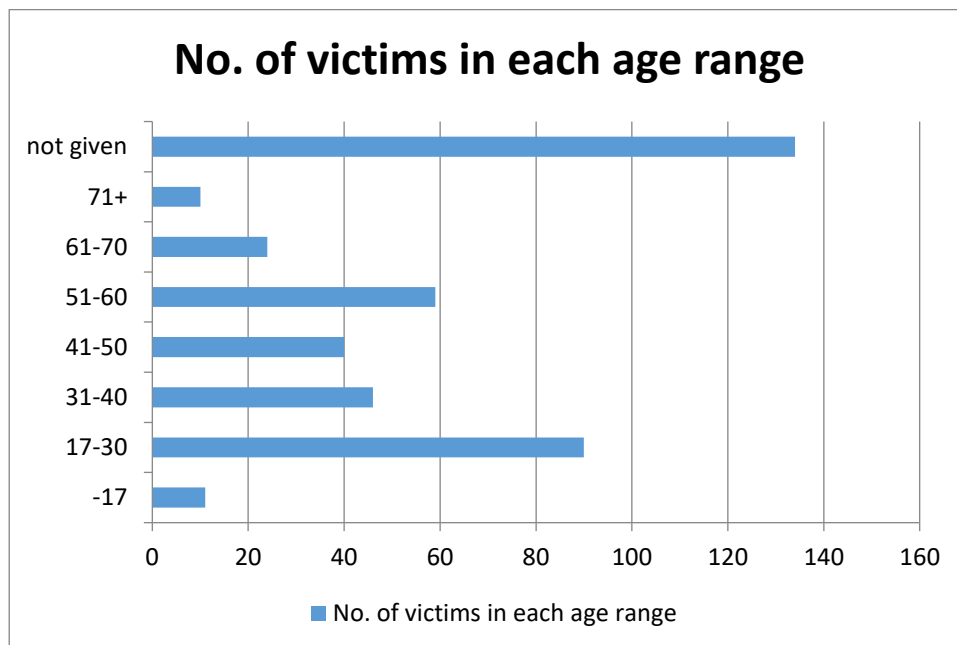
	FSW AKL	FSW Chch	FSW CM	<sup>16</sup> Other SW	Grand Total
<b>Victim Role</b>					
Aunt of Primary Victim	1	2	3	12	18
Colleague of Primary Victim		1		1	2
Cousin of Primary Victim	8	6	7	7	28
Daughter in law of Primary Victim			2	2	4
Daughter of Primary Victim	13	5	13	17	48
Discoverer (Non-related)		1		1	2
Discoverer (Related)			1		1
Employer of Primary Victim				1	1
Ex-partner of Primary Victim	2	1	4	2	9
Family Spokesperson	4		3	2	9
First on Scene				5	5
Flatmate				2	2
Friend of Primary Victim	7		1	11	19
Grandchild of Primary Victim		1	3	1	5
Grandparent of Primary Victim	2	3	3	8	16
Legal Guardian		1			1
Neighbour of Primary Victim		1		7	8
Nephew of Primary Victim	7	2	1	2	12
Niece of Primary Victim	9	3	8	7	27
Parent in law of Primary Victim		1		4	5
Parent of Primary Victim	15	24	12	47	98
Parent of Witness				1	1
Partner of Primary Victim	5	2	5	13	25
Primary Victim (Living)		2	2	13	17
Relative of Deceased	1	1	3		5
Relative of Primary Victim		1	1	2	4
Relative of Witness				4	4
Sibling in law of Primary Victim	9	6	20	16	51
Sibling of Primary Victim	47	31	43	47	168
Son in law of Primary Victim	1	1	4	2	8
Son of Primary Victim	8	7	6	9	30
Spouse of Primary Victim	1	1	1	5	8
Step child of Primary Victim		2			2
Step parent of Primary Victim	2	5		3	10
Step Sibling of Primary Victim	1				1
Support Person		4	1	8	13
Uncle of Primary Victim		2	2	3	7
Whangai Mother				1	1
Witness	3		2	24	29

<b>Grand Total</b>	146	117	151	290	704
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**Table 14: Ethnicity of victims supported by FSWs from 1/7/15 – 30/6/15**

Ethnicity	Number	%
<b>Not recorded (includes unknown)</b>	157	38
<b>Asian</b>	1	0
<b>Australian</b>	2	1
<b>Cook Islander</b>	1	0
<b>European</b>	8	2
<b>Fiji Indian</b>	14	3
<b>Indian</b>	8	2
<b>Māori</b>	88	21
<b>NZ European (Pakeha)</b>	110	27
<b>Other</b>	8	2
<b>Pacific – non-specific</b>	3	1
<b>Samoan</b>	11	3
<b>South African</b>	2	0
<b>Vietnamese</b>	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 2: Age of victims supported by FSWs from 1/7/14 – 30/6/15**



# Appendix Two: Evaluation tools

## Evaluation of the Homicide Caseworker Support Service Pilot

### Information sheet for family members

Kia ora, Greetings, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Malo e lelei, Taloha ni, Bula Vinaka,

Fakalofa lahi atu

We are researchers who are evaluating the Homicide Caseworker service for the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry wants to know what you think of the way the fulltime Victim Support Family Support Worker has been working with you and whether there is anything they could do better.

We would like to invite you to take part in a face-to-face interview. We can meet at a time that suits you and in a place where you feel comfortable. Depending on how much time you need, the interview will last about an hour. If you wish, you can choose to have a Māori, Pacific or New Zealand European interviewer. You may also wish to invite other family members or a support person to join you for the interview.

You don't have to agree to take part in an interview, and if you do agree, you don't have to answer every question. Whether or not you take part will make no difference to your case or your dealings with Victim Support, Police or Courts.

#### ***What will the interview be about?***

- Your experiences with the Family Support Worker
- What you think of the way the Family Support Worker has worked with you
- What has gone well and any improvements you would suggest.

#### ***What will happen to your information?***

The information from interviews with people who have used the service, as well as interviews with Victim Support and others in the justice system will be combined together into a report for the Ministry of Justice. We will not use your name or any information that might identify you in the report. The report might eventually be published on the internet.

Anything you tell us will be used only for the research and kept confidential to us unless someone's safety is at risk. If during the interview you indicate that you or someone else is at serious and immediate risk of harm, the interviewer has to report that to the appropriate agency.

If you agree, the interview will be audio recorded. All our records will be kept safe and destroyed after three years.

If you have any questions about taking part in this interview, please contact (by text or phone if you wish):

#### **Trish Young**

Tel \_\_\_\_\_, email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Catherine Poutasi**

Tel \_\_\_\_\_, email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Alison Chetwin** (evaluation leader)

Tel \_\_\_\_\_, email: \_\_\_\_\_

# Evaluation of the Homicide Caseworker Support Service Pilot

## Consent form

I (insert name) .....

of (insert address) .....agree to participate  
in an interview on my experience with the Homicide Caseworker Service.

I understand that:

- I don't have to take part, I don't have to answer all the questions and I can stop the interview at any time without giving a reason
- Anything I say, or whether or not I take part will not affect my case or dealings with Victim Support, Police or Courts
- My name will not be used in the evaluation report
- Anything I tell you will not be passed on to Victim Support, Police or other agencies, unless someone's safety is at risk. If I indicate that I am or someone else is at serious and immediate risk of harm, I understand that the interviewer has to report this to the appropriate agency.
- I can request any information collected from me to be withdrawn up to two weeks after my interview
- If I agree, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed
- All records will be kept safe, paper and electronic copies will be destroyed after three years and audio recordings will be deleted after being transcribed.

I have read the information sheet and this consent form, and been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I give my consent to take part in this interview.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Please tick if you consent to the interview being audio recorded

# Evaluation of the Fulltime Homicide Caseworker Support Service pilot

## Interview guide for service users

### *Introductions*

*Purpose of interview and evaluation*

*Information sheet and consent form*

*Check permission to audio record*

*Any questions before we begin?*

- 1 Can you tell me how the Family Support Worker has worked with you?
- 2 Can you tell me about the time when you first had contact with the Family Support Worker?
  - When you first had contact what did the Family Support Worker do to help you?
  - How much did the Family Support Worker meet your needs at this time?
  - Was there anything that the Family Support Worker could have done but didn't do at this time to help you?
- 3 What kinds of support have you had from the Family Support Worker over time?
  - How well did the Family Support Worker understand your needs as time went on?
  - How well did they respond if/when you asked for support?
  - Did they spend enough time with you?
  - Did the Family Support Worker help you to deal with the media? If so, in what ways?
  - How well prepared were you to deal with the media?
- 4 How much has the Family Support Worker helped in dealing with the police and court processes?

*[Note the participant may refer to: being able to be with their deceased family member; police gathering evidence; formal police interviews; attending hearings; attending trial; giving evidence; attending sentencing; preparing and delivering a Victim Impact Statement]*

  - Did you know what to expect at each stage?
  - How well prepared were you for the different stages?
  - Did the Family Support Worker help you to deal with official people who were involved? If so, in what ways?
  - Did you give formal interviews? If so, how well prepared were you for those? How much did the Family Support Worker help with this?
  - Did you appear in Court? If so, how well prepared were you? How much did the Family Support Worker help with this?

Did you give a Victim Impact Statement? If so, how much did the Family Support Worker help with this?

- 5 Did the Family Support Worker help you with applying for money to meet some of your needs?

If so, in what ways?

- 6 Did the Family Support Worker arrange special help, counselling and/or cultural support for you or others in your family?

How far were your cultural needs met? Did the Family Support Worker find the right kind of cultural support?

- 7 Overall how well has the Family Support Worker worked with you?

What went well?

What could have been done better?

*[Note: if not mentioned already, prompt for ease of communication; caring; cultural sensitivity; tailored support; non-judgementalism; competence]*

And in hindsight were there any other things that you felt the Family Support Worker could have helped you with?

- 8 In what ways could the Family Support Worker Service be improved for people facing similar experiences?

- 9 Before we finish, is there anything more that you would like to say about the Family Support Worker Service?

# Evaluation of the Homicide Caseworker Support Service Pilot

## Information sheet for stakeholders

Kia ora, greetings

We are a team of independent researchers led by Alison Chetwin and we are evaluating the Homicide Caseworker Support Service pilot for the Ministry of Justice. The service has been provided by Victim Support in Auckland, Counties Manukau and Canterbury since January 2014. It aims to provide an intensive support service to families of victims of homicide.

The purpose of the evaluation is to inform future decisions relating to the continuation or expansion of the Service. The evaluation aims to explain how the pilot operates, understand the effect of the service on service users, and identify potential improvements to the service.

We would like to invite you as a key stakeholder to take part in a face-to-face interview. We can meet at a time to suit you and the interview will last about 45 minutes.

You don't have to agree to take part, and if you do, you don't have to answer every question.

### ***What will the interview be about?***

- Your role in relation to the Service
- Your views on which aspects of the Service have gone well and what could be done better
- Your views on how well the Service is supporting families of homicide victims
- How the Service could be improved.

### ***What will happen to your information?***

The information from (1) interviews with people who have used the service, (2) interviews with stakeholders in Victim Support and the justice system, and (3) statistics about the service will be combined together into a report for the Ministry of Justice.

Anything you tell us will be used only for the research and kept confidential to us except as it is used in the report. We will not use your name in the report but we will refer to the roles and organisations of participants, so it is possible you may be identifiable. We will offer the opportunity to check any quotes before they are used in the report. The report may eventually be published on the internet.

You may request that your information be withdrawn from the evaluation up to two weeks following your interview.

If you agree, the interview will be audio recorded. All our records will be kept confidentially and paper and electronic copies will be destroyed after three years.

If you have any questions about taking part in this evaluation, please contact:

**Alison Chetwin** (evaluation leader)

Tel \_\_\_\_\_, email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tim Hall** (Contract Manager, Victims Centre, Ministry of Justice)

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Evaluation of the Fulltime Homicide Caseworker Support Service pilot**

### **Interview guide for operational stakeholders**

(VS operational staff, Victim Court Advisers, Crown, Counsellors, Police)

- 1 What is your role in relation to the Homicide Caseworker Support Service?  
What impacts has the Homicide Caseworker Service had on your role?  
What impacts has the Homicide Caseworker Service had on your organisation?
- 2 What in your view are the purposes of the Homicide Caseworker Service?
- 3 To what extent do you think that the Homicide Caseworker Service is reaching all of those eligible to receive it?
- 4 In your view, what has gone well and what could have been done better in relation to:  
*[select topics relevant to the stakeholder's role from the list below]*

#### **Support**

- Supporting family members in the initial crisis response
- Assessing family members' needs
- Supporting family members in being able to be with their deceased family member
- Supporting family members in dealing with the media
- Caseworkers and homicide volunteers working together?

#### **Assisting with access to other services**

- Assisting family members to access financial support
- Assisting family members to access specialist psychological support
- Assisting family members to find cultural or community support

#### **Supporting family members through investigations**

- Supporting family members when Police gather evidence or undertake formal interviews

#### **Supporting family members through the court process**

- Supporting family members when attending hearings
- Supporting family members when giving evidence
- Supporting family members when preparing and delivering a Victim Impact Statement

- 5 *[Question for all except Homicide Caseworkers]*

In your view, to what extent have Homicide Caseworkers:

- Communicated well with family members?
- Showed a caring attitude?
- Showed a non-judgemental attitude?
- Showed cultural sensitivity?

Showed competence in their role?

**6 [Additional question for Victim Support participants]**

*What has gone well and what could be done better in relation to:*

*Training and inducting Homicide Caseworkers?*

*Supervision of practice?*

*Meeting cultural and language needs? [E.g. ensuring an ethnically diverse workforce; engaging translation services; or liaising with specific community cultural services]*

*Setting remuneration for Homicide Caseworkers?*

*Resourcing Homicide Caseworkers?*

*Managing Homicide Caseworkers' workloads?*

7 Overall what are the main successes of the Homicide Caseworker Service?

8 In what ways could the Homicide Caseworker Service be improved?

9 Before we finish, is there anything more that you would like to say about the Homicide Caseworker Service?

# Evaluation of the Fulltime Homicide Caseworker Support Service pilot

## Interview guide for strategic stakeholders

(VS senior managers, VS Board, MoJ)

- 1 What is your role in relation to the Homicide Caseworker Support Service?
- 2 What impacts has the Homicide Caseworker Service had on your organisation?
- 3 What in your view are the purposes of the Homicide Caseworker Service?
- 4 To what extent do you think that the Homicide Caseworker Service is reaching all of those eligible to receive it?
- 5 In your view, what has gone well and what could have been done better in relation to:

*[if appropriate, select topics relevant to the stakeholder's role from the list below]*

Supporting family members in the initial crisis response and beyond

Assisting family members to access other types of support – financial, psychological, cultural

Supporting family members through investigations

Supporting family members through the court process

### **6 [Additional question for Victim Support participants]**

*What has gone well and what could be done better in relation to:*

*Training and inducting Homicide Caseworkers?*

*Supervision of practice?*

*Meeting cultural and language needs? [E.g. ensuring an ethnically diverse workforce]*

*Setting remuneration for Homicide Caseworkers?*

*Resourcing Homicide Caseworkers?*

*Managing Homicide Caseworkers' workloads?*

*How can caseworkers and homicide volunteers work best together?*

- 7 Overall what are the main successes of the Homicide Caseworker Service?
- 8 What impact has the pilot had on the victim services sector? Why?
- 9 Has the Pilot presented any reputational risks or benefits to your organisation?
- 10 To what extent has the pilot appeared to relieve or add to the operational burden on your organisation?
- 11 In what ways could the Homicide Caseworker Service be improved?
- 12 What would be the implications of extending the service nationally?
- 13 Before we finish, is there anything more that you would like to say about the Homicide Caseworker Service?