TIGHTENING THE GATEWAY TO EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION OR CLOSING THE DOOR TO SAFETY?

Victims of intimate partner violence and the emergency housing system in Aotearoa

2026



WOMEN'S REFUGE

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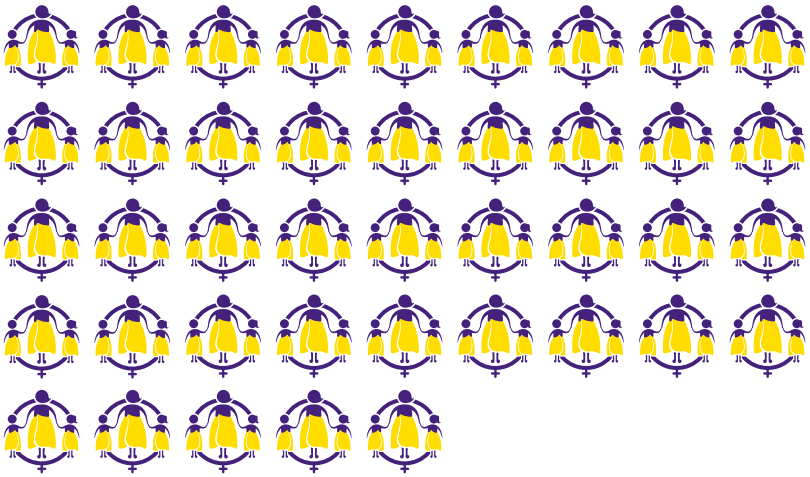
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Women's Refuge

The National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges | Ngā Whare Whakaruruhau o Aotearoa (NCIWR), has been providing support to women, children, and whānau impacted by family violence for over 50 years.

Our vision is for all women and children in Aotearoa to live free from family violence.



NCIWR comprises **41** affiliated Women's Refuges and is the largest nationwide organisation providing immediate crisis and long-term family violence specialist advocacy to women in Aotearoa.



Thank You

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in this research.
Your kōrero makes this mahi possible.

I orea te tuatara ka patu ki waho.

A problem is solved by continuing to find solutions.

contact

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Overview



Overview

Every year, intimate partner violence (IPV) drives thousands of women from their homes. It is a common, chronic, and costly issue. Women's Refuge research shows that women and children are forced to leave their homes and communities to seek safety, and in doing so, face the prospect of homelessness – through no fault of their own.

IPV is a leading cause of homelessness for women. The emergency housing system is an essential form of support for women and children escaping family violence in Aotearoa. Yet this system is not set up for them. It does not differentiate the cause of their homelessness from general housing need, and as a result, discounts the immediate and enduring risks they face and destabilises their lives further.

The 'Tightening the Gateway' policy, introduced in 2024, aimed for (and achieved) a 75 percent reduction in the number of households staying in emergency accommodation.[1] While government ministers and public service officials claim this policy change has not affected victims of IPV needing to access the emergency housing system (something they collect no data on), the interconnection between IPV and women's homelessness suggests a very different picture.

About the Report

This report is part of a broader project carried out by Women's Refuge (with the support of our partners Contact Energy) exploring what makes victims of IPV safer, and what puts them at greater risk. It draws from the responses of women and non-binary victims of IPV to a survey in December 2024, which asked them about their experiences of violence, its impacts on different parts of their lives, and how the risks that violence left behind shifted as a result of services' responses to them.

This report has three main parts. The first provides an overview of the experiences of women who, as a result of violence perpetrated by a current or former partner, have had to stay in emergency or transitional housing (ETH). The second, drawing on social entrapment theory, analyses the 'Tightening the Gateway' policy and considers its potential implications for this particularly at-risk group of IPV victims. Lastly, supplementary material is provided to situate this analysis within the broader context of the emergency housing system and women's homelessness in Aotearoa, highlighting the interconnections between housing instability and intimate partner violence.

This paper sets out how IPV dismantles women's access to housing, and the role housing policy plays in either enabling or disabling victims' safety during attempts to separate from an abusive partner. We focus particularly on the changes to eligibility for the Emergency Housing Grant – the proverbial gateway that has been tightened – and the dangerous implications it has for women's and children's safety.

The emergency housing system in Aotearoa is multi-faceted. It comprises many initiatives that are run by both government and non-governmental organisations. The two branches that deliver the majority of the service are: the *Emergency Housing Grant* and *Transitional Housing*[i].[2] The Ministry for Social Development (MSD) is responsible for emergency accommodation, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development oversees *Transitional Housing* – 80% of *Transitional Housing* referrals come through MSD.[3] For clarity, we use the term 'emergency housing system' as the umbrella term for both of these and use the term 'emergency accommodation' to refer specifically to housing provided under the *Emergency Housing Grant*.

Social entrapment theory, provides a framework to understand how pathways to safety can be blocked not only by the risk from the perpetrator but also by the absence or restriction of safe options provided by those positioned to support victims.[4]

[i] *Transitional Housing* refers to short-term accommodation supplied by contracted housing support providers, alongside tailored wrap-around support for residents.

About the Respondents

This report draws primarily from the experiences of 338 survey respondents. Occasional comparison is made to the 1,707 victims overall to illustrate key differences.

Most of this group (n=290) had dependent children accessing emergency accommodation or transitional housing (ETH) with them. An overwhelming majority were separated from their perpetrators, and most had attempted separation from these perpetrators multiple times before, underlining the difficulty of maintaining independence and autonomy.



338 (20.1%)
reported that because of the violence, they had to stay in emergency accommodation or transitional housing (ETH)

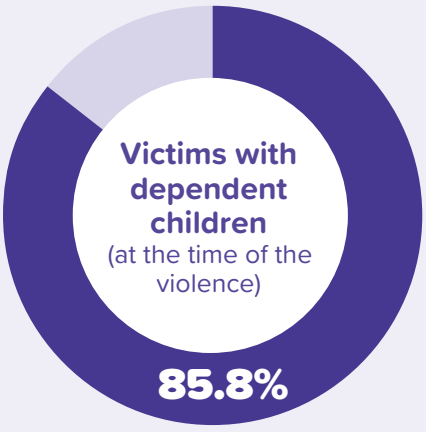






Figure 1.

Quick Facts about IPV and Homelessness

Intimate partner violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children.[5]





In Aotearoa it is estimated that women make up around 50 percent of those experiencing homelessness, latest Census data puts this figure at 57,000.[6]



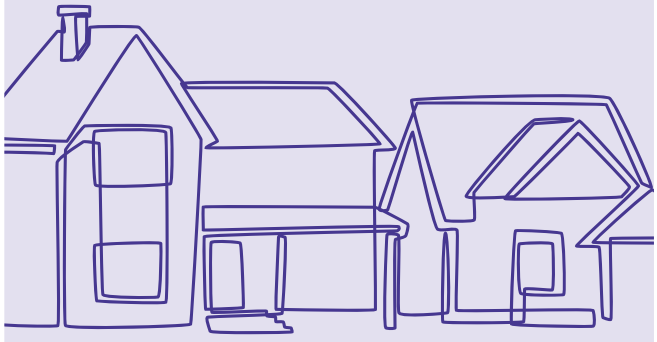
Housing policy and service delivery

(outside of the specialist family violence sector) in Aotearoa does not appear to account for, or cater specifically to, either gendered need or needs specific to IPV.[7]

Comprehensive research overseen by the Coalition to End Women's Homelessness found that

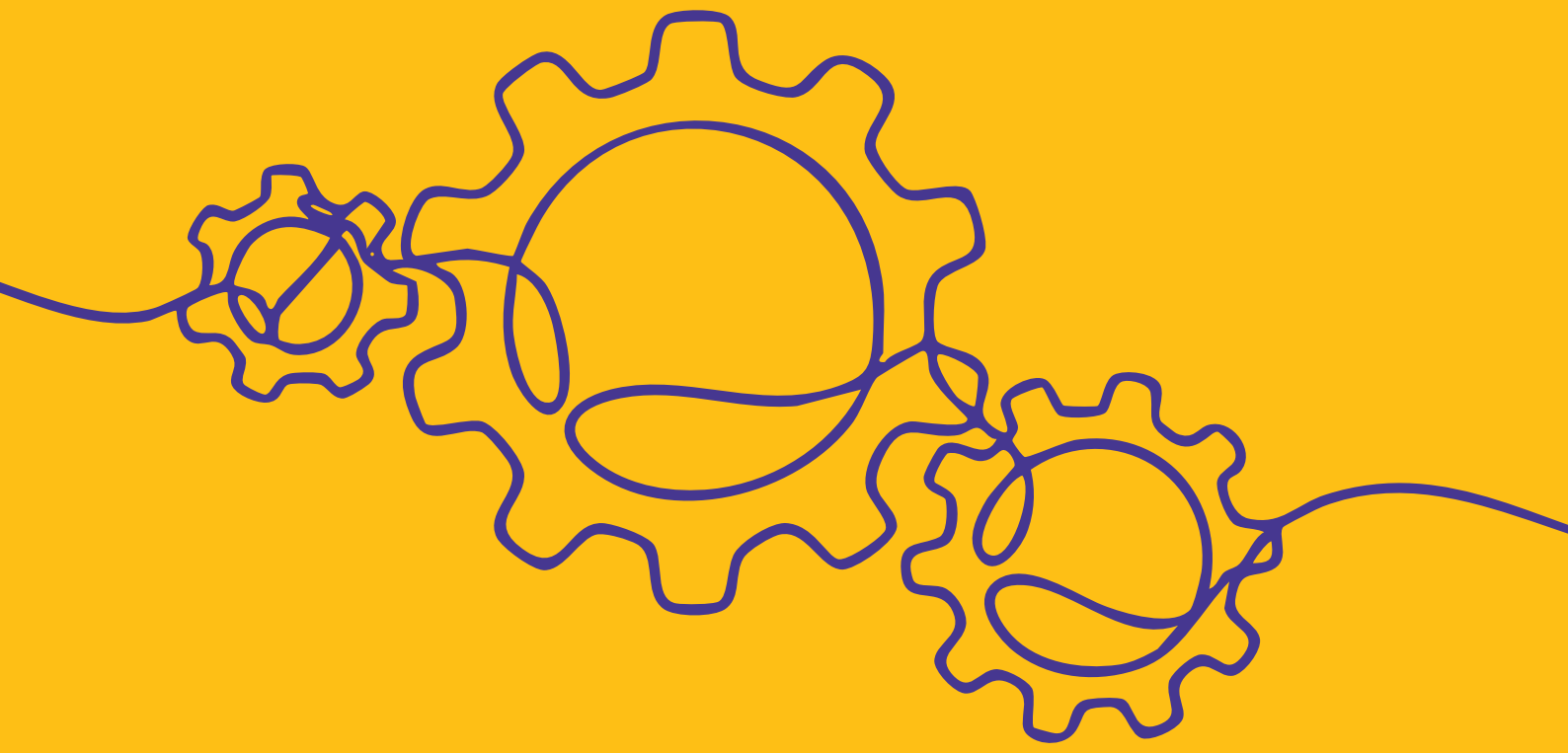
ongoing barriers to housing stability

for women and victims of violence are the result of gender-blind and violence-blind approaches.[8]



THE CONTEXT OF HOUSING NEED

IPV and System Responses



The Violence and its Consequences

Victims who ended up in ETH because of the violence perpetrated against them reported severe violence and equally severe impacts on every aspect of their lives. They were more likely than other victims to be subjected to physical violence (91.4%, compared to 77.9% overall) and to still be experiencing violence at the time of completing the survey (26.6%, compared to 21% overall). A significant majority still lived in constant fear of the perpetrator at the time of the survey, and most found managing everyday life much harder because of the abuse.

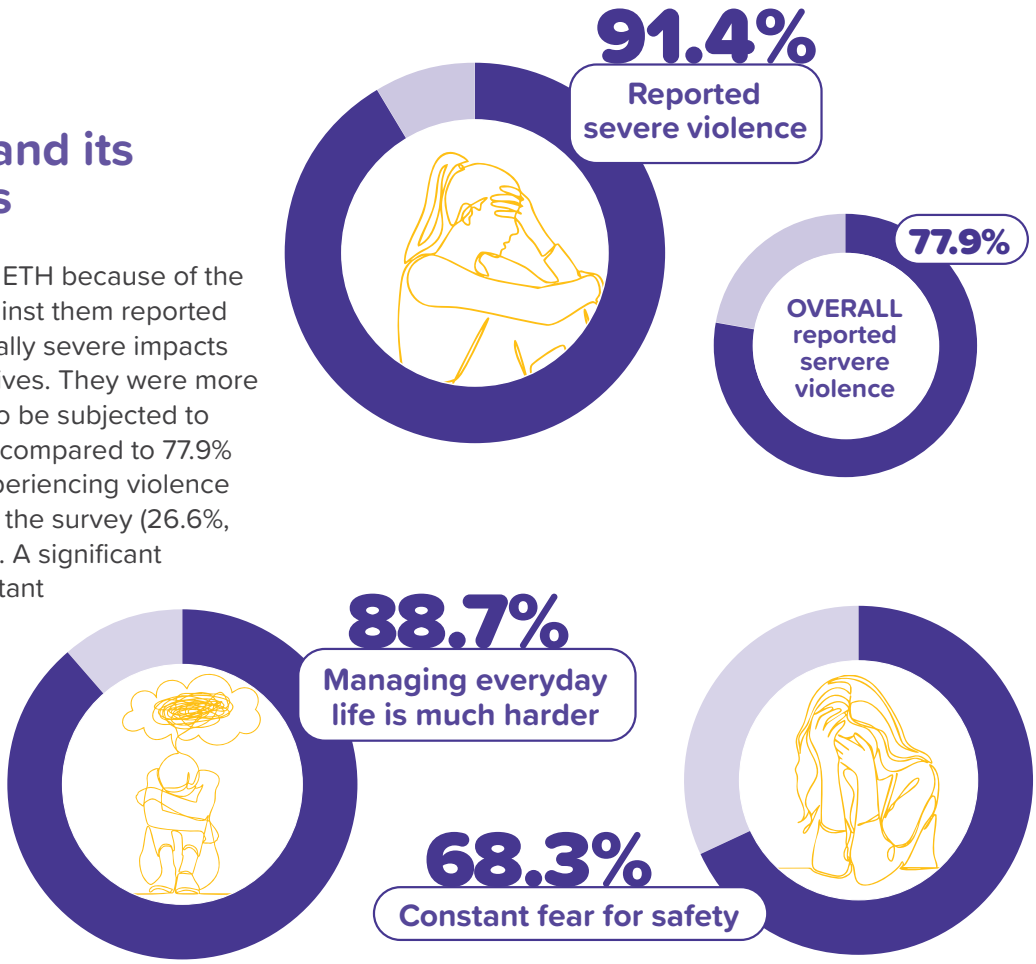


Figure 2.

Victims in this group were much more likely to have had to access a specialist family violence service like Women's Refuge (78.3% compared to 48.1% of the overall sample) and much more likely to have had to stay in a Women's Refuge safehouse (49.8% compared to 18.6% of the overall sample). Safehouse stays are only utilised when there is a severe a sustained threat to safety.

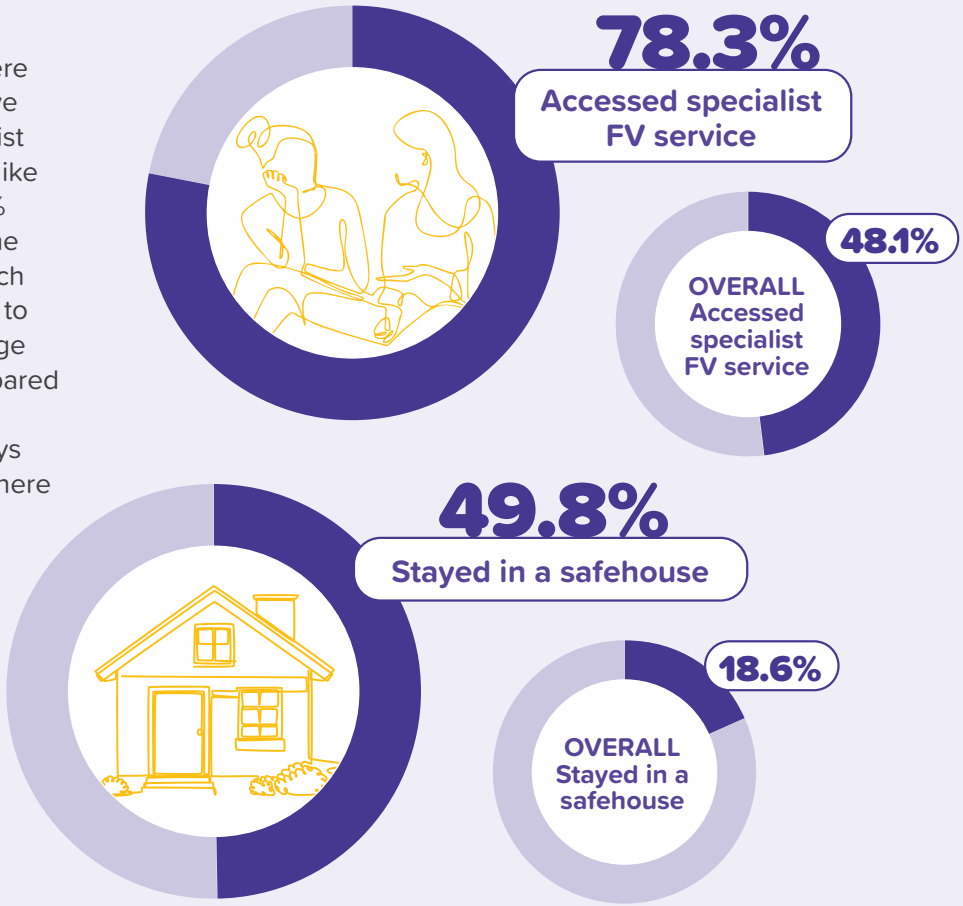


Figure 3.

Surviving and coping with IPV also takes an immense toll on time, energy, and capacity. Violence seldom ends when the relationship does, and victims reported that during the worst of the violence, they lost sleep, rest, and downtime, and spent hours every day simply managing the risks of their perpetrators' violence, leaving little capacity to contend with additional impacts of violence such as housing precarity. Any of these impacts can, on their own, be disabling. When combined with the very real risk of homelessness, they can effectively preclude any opportunity for recovery and stabilisation.

In addition, victims who had accessed ETH because of the violence were also more likely to suffer severe social and relational consequences of that violence. These consequences include being disconnected from their whānau and whakapapa, having less informal support, and having difficulty sustaining relationships with friends and whānau during the abuse.

These signal how perpetrators' attempts to isolate them precludes their access to informal sources of help and support, which in turn reduces the likelihood of them having accommodation options such as staying with their friends or families.



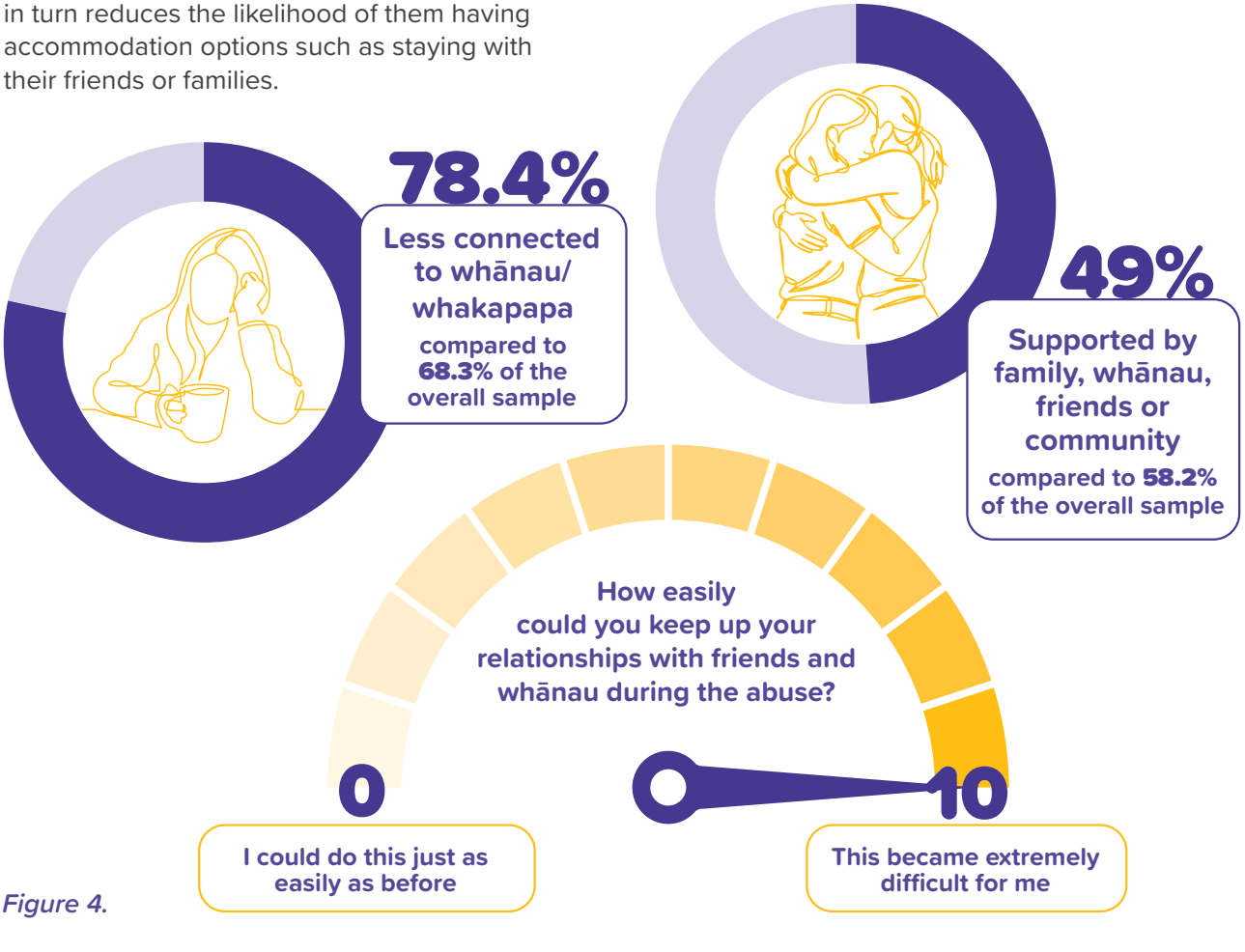
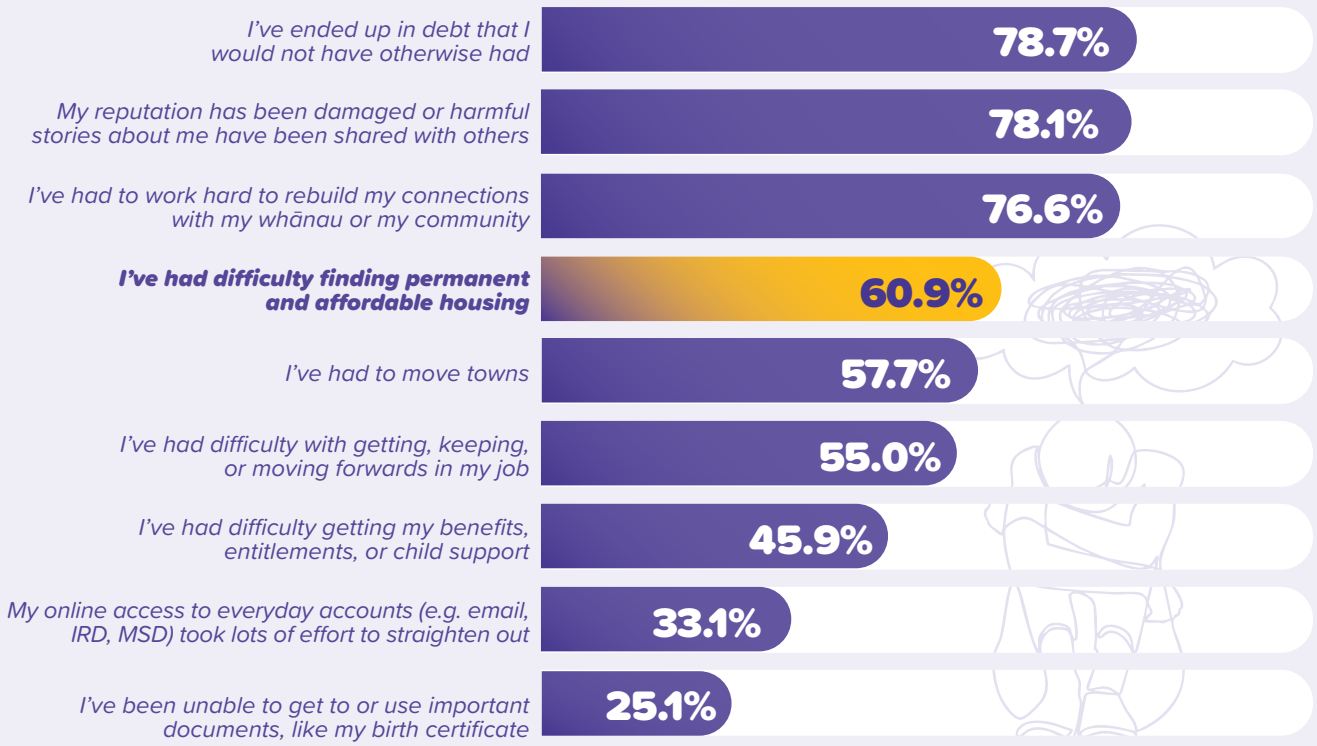


Figure 4.

Our study also canvassed a wide range of further impacts to victims' health, resources, prospects, routines, and relationships by asking respondents to select every hardship, burden, or type of adversity they experienced as a result of their perpetrator's violence. Below, we set out those that directly relate to the viability of their access to appropriate housing.

Figure 5.



Collectively, these paint a picture of cumulative and layered implications for women's (and their children's) housing prospects. More importantly, they show how these are all instigated and sustained by the behaviour of perpetrators – not by victims themselves.

For instance, trying to find access to suitable housing may be difficult when a victim has to move towns suddenly to escape violence, and their employment changes. It may be exponentially more difficult if they are doing so while losing several hours of sleep or rest per day, when their time is absorbed by safety strategizing, and when their perpetrator has circulated malicious rumours about what they are like as a tenant.

Given these layered impacts, it is unsurprising that 60 percent had trouble finding appropriate housing because of the violence. Perpetrators can manipulate victims' housing access in numerous, often creative ways, such as by impeding their access to key records, leaving them with debt they accrued, or restricting their access to their own online accounts.

Experience with Services

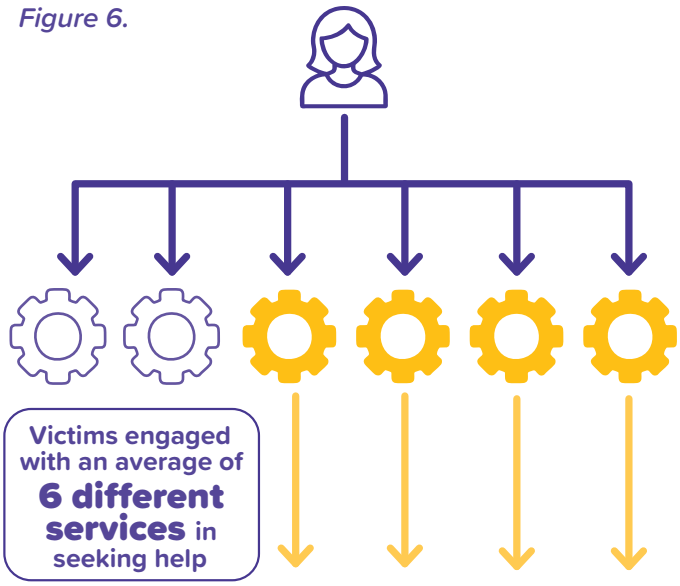
IPV is the catalyst for multiple, sometimes lifelong, risks to victims. However, the context of victims' housing need is not solely constructed by violence; system responses to violence, and the extent to which they mitigate or amplify risks to victims, heavily contribute. In addition to the often-disabling everyday impacts of IPV, and the myriad ways that perpetrators' abuse tactics sabotaged victims' access to housing, the very act of engaging with services in the aftermath of violence required immense investment of victims' time and energy. This investment did not always (or automatically) yield positive results.

Victims had to access an average of six services or agencies to deal with the consequences of their (ex)partner's violence. 'Services' was defined broadly and may include, for instance, engaging with counsellors, Refuges, kids' schools, Work and Income, IRD, safety programmes, medical services, Police, or legal/court services, among others. Victims felt some of these services lacked a sufficient understanding of IPV as the context for why victims were accessing them.

It took them an average of 24 hours (often spread over weeks or months) seeking help before anything useful eventuated. These additional burdens underline the inadequacy of service design; no single service touchpoint was sufficient to secure the means of everyday stability in the lives of those whose safety was violated.

Yet victims had to continue engaging for an average of 12 months (and often longer) for an average of 18 hours per month – all while a majority (58.8%) struggled to meet the unrealistic expectations services had of them in return. Ultimately, many victims (42.8%) said services' involvement made it worse, rather than better.

Figure 6.



Victims engaged with an average of **6 different services** in seeking help

They reported that, of these, **4 services understood** the violence they were experiencing

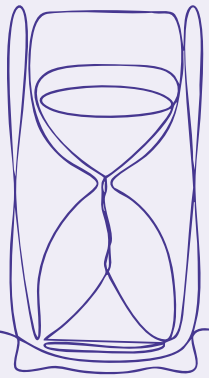
Help-seeking took up

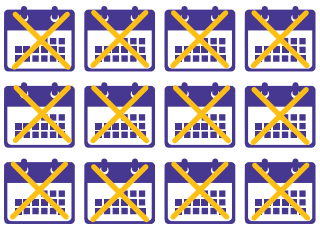
18 hours per month for victims

It took, on average,

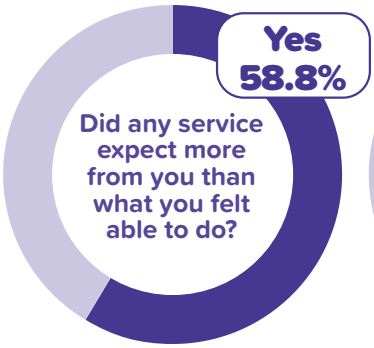
24 hours of effort

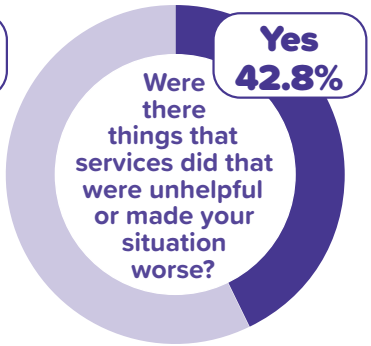
before anything useful happened for them





Victims spent an average of **12 months** interacting with these services. This was the top of the scale we provided.







Summary

Victims and their children have the very infrastructure of their lives eroded by the actions of those perpetrating violence against them. Because of this violence, they suffer a double indignity: first of direct victimisation, and then of the insidious dismantling of their access to the fundamental resources they need to live, parent, and recover.

The latter of these indignities is heavily oriented by the extent to which services, including (and especially) housing services, are equipped, willing, and designed to respond to the violation of victims' rights with solutions that recognise and account for IPV as the cause of both present need and ongoing risk.

Victims who had accessed ETH reported comparatively severe violence, which undermined their means, capacity, resources, and opportunities to access and maintain their housing. Their need for housing services is therefore comparatively greater – as are the risks to their safety when these needs remain unmet. When such systems are responsive to the context of IPV, they serve victims' safety and wellbeing. When they are not, they serve the interests of violent perpetrators.

The remaining sections of this paper explain how the current emergency housing system pathways form part of a family violence response system by default, rather than by design. It concludes with a discussion of what needs to change to uphold victims' rights to safety after these have been so destructively breached by violent perpetrators.[ii]

[ii] The importance of, and formula for, safer responses is discussed in detail in the recent in-depth research report released by *NCIWR: Safer When, Safer How? Reframing 'risk' and 'safety' in intimate partner violence.* https://womensrefuge.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/SWSH-reframing-risk-and-safety-research-WEB.pdf

‘Tightening the Gateway’



‘Tightening the Gateway’

In August 2024 significant changes were made to emergency accommodation access through a policy referred to as ‘Tightening the Gateway’. This policy is a significant step towards an overarching goal of eliminating emergency accommodation from the broader emergency housing system.[9] While the policy specifically targets emergency accommodation, the changes are expected to flow on and result in a reduction in client numbers across the entire emergency housing system.[10]

One of the goals of ‘Tightening the Gateway’ is to “reduce demand and prevent the need for emergency accommodation”.[11] However, the steps outlined in the policy appear to be geared more towards narrowing the definition of ‘need’ rather than meeting need by:

i. introducing more restrictive expectations and responsibilities for those applying for and staying in emergency accommodation – including requiring applicants to prove their immediate need and attempts to access other adequate accommodation,[12] and

ii. removing the requirement to consider whether denying someone emergency accommodation would “worsen the applicant’s position”.[13] The removal of this requirement is notable as declining emergency accommodation “almost always worsened an applicant’s position in the short-term”.[14]

If a person is accepted into emergency accommodation, there are ongoing requirements for them after the first seven days. People must:

- engage with support services (if they have been referred to any),
- make reasonable efforts to find alternative accommodation, and
- pay a contribution towards the accommodation – 25 percent of either their income or benefit.[15]

These expectations are not new. However, MSD has now been given the power to enforce them with consequences because of the removal of the requirement to consider whether declining clients would worsen their situation.[16] Those who do not meet these requirements (after two warnings) face eviction, and the new policy then stipulates a 13-week non-entitlement period from service – meaning that those in need would not be able to access safety in the form of emergency accommodation for upwards of three months.[17]

In the new policy, there is no provision for women or victims of IPV. IPV, or other kinds of family violence, are rarely mentioned in the policy documents – staff are advised to use discretion if (known) victims do not meet their stated responsibilities in emergency accommodation and escalate renewals to national office in these circumstances.[18] Women, as a cohort, are seldom mentioned. One footnote to the policy acknowledges that women who are sole parents make up the majority (82%) of the group that the policy recognises will continue to utilise emergency accommodation.[19] This acknowledgement highlights the similarity between the ETH cohort of IPV victims discussed in this paper (85.8% of whom are single mothers) and those whom the government acknowledge will continue to need emergency accommodation. Given this recognised picture of need, and the known link between women’s homelessness and violence against them, the lack of consideration for IPV as a gendered driver of homelessness and housing needs is a concerning oversight.

Policy Outcomes

The initial result of ‘Tightening the Gateway’ was a rapid decline in the number of households in emergency accommodation, from approximately 2,000 households in June 2024, to 460 households in June 2025.[20] It has been reported that 80 percent of the reduction is accounted for by those in emergency accommodation being supported into social, transitional, or private housing instead. However, this leaves 20 percent of those who have left the service unaccounted for.[21]

Further, since the implementation of the policy, the decline rate for applications has increased from 5 percent to over 30 percent.[22] Taken together, this initial outcome data, rather than showing a reduction in demand, suggests that

fewer people in need are being granted access to the service and/or those already within emergency accommodation are not receiving renewals to stay.

Women's Refuge service data does not show a decline in clients needing emergency housing in the past year. In fact, in a small survey of frontline Refuge staff from late November 2024,[iii] 73.9 percent identified housing as a key system/policy barrier that gets in the way of clients' safety and wellbeing. Kaimahi noted that: *"accessing housing and funding is becoming increasingly difficult and taking longer to implement".* Several specified that *"eligibility for housing – transitional, emergency, private rentals or any rental space"* was a key factor in problems with accommodation.

Policy Implications for Victims of IPV

Barriers to Safety

When victims start the difficult process of finding alternative accommodation because of violence, any barrier to accessing this puts safety further out of reach for them.[23] The 'Tightening the Gateway' policy imposes barriers and as such will further entrap victims. Requirements that victims provide evidence about housing need, alongside evidence of attempts to secure housing through alternative support channels, sets an evidentiary threshold that many victims will struggle to meet because of the very nature and impacts of IPV.

Firstly, our data specifically shows that just over 30 percent of victims who accessed ETH had their access to everyday accounts compromised, and one quarter were unable to get or use important documents **because of the violence** (see Figure 5). With a limited capacity to retrieve 'evidence' of need from online accounts or provide information from important documents, victims cannot prove need – meaning there is a chance they can be cut off from help at the first hurdle. In short, victimisation negatively impacts their ability to prove eligibility.

Secondly, our data shows that victims of IPV are already consumed with the administrative burden of help seeking. At the same time, victims who accessed ETH are likely to be dealing with the risk and fallout of ongoing violence, which absorbs a significant amount of their time and detracts from their ability to manage and cope with day-to-day life. For victims, a more demanding application process constitutes a further barrier to accessing emergency accommodation because of how IPV restricts their time and capacity to collate evidence of need and navigate their way through a hostile process.

Lastly, requiring victims to demonstrate that they have attempted to gain housing prior to applying for emergency accommodation, and again seven days after being accepted into emergency accommodation, creates a process that is disproportionately unsafe. In the period immediately preceding an application for emergency housing many victims are fleeing a violent partner or attempting to extricate themselves from an unsafe relationship. This period is widely recognised as the time when victims face the greatest risk of being killed or severely injured.[24] Our data indicate that this cohort of victims are more socially isolated, reducing the likelihood that they will have informal accommodation options available to them. Private rental accommodation may also be unattainable for many victims who have to access ETH, given the cumulative effects of violence on their economic security; 78.7 percent reported increased debt and 55 percent had trouble retaining their employment because of the violence. In sum, the experience of escaping violence, social isolation, and financial instability creates substantial barriers to providing evidence of making reasonable efforts to obtain alternative accommodation.

'Tightening the Gateway' has also given scope to decline access to the service where there is evidence that the applicant "caused or contributed to their immediate need".[25] Two specific scenarios are given as examples of this:

- if someone cannot remain in their current home due to their own behaviour (e.g. threatening behaviour or significant property damage), or
- if they have moved regions (and it is perceived that this was to access emergency accommodation).

[iii] The survey had 51 respondents total, 46 of whom answered this specific question.

In response to the first scenario, aggregated risk information from Refuge clients across the country shows that perpetrators damaging property as a form of intimidation is common. Of 5000 clients, 65.2 percent of clients reported this.[iv] Having a history of property damage and possible evictions **because of the perpetrator's violence** may result in a denial of service for victims under this new, more punitive measure; particularly given there is no IPV-informed policy differentiation between perpetrator-caused damage (and associated evictions) and client-caused ones.

The second scenario – moving regions to access emergency accommodation – also disproportionately applies to and negatively impacts IPV victims. Data in Figure 5 shows that 57.7 percent of victims *had to move towns* **because of the perpetrator's violence.** Relocation for IPV victims, especially if done urgently, may necessitate an application for emergency accommodation due to a lack of other options. Victims who accessed ETH face intense isolation and physical violence – moving towns is often vital for their safety because of the perpetrators' extreme control, volatility, and threat to life.[26] Under 'Tightening the Gateway' the only option for victims in this situation would be to disclose their experience in order to access emergency accommodation. If they do not disclose,[v] then there is the potential for a denial of service because their sudden move may be deemed as "contributing to their immediate need".[27]

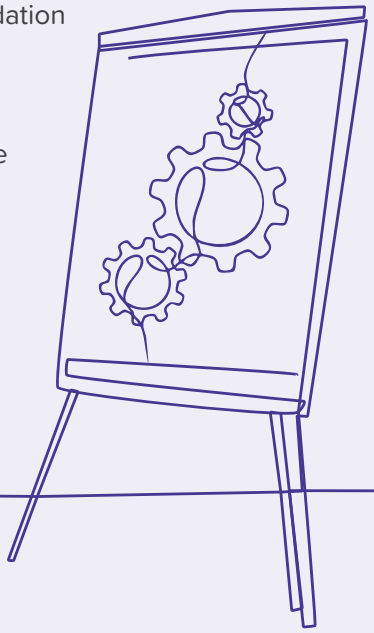
Decisions from support services, especially at such a vital juncture, therefore either facilitate safety for the victim by enabling them to stay separated or collude with the perpetrator's interests by denying service, thus punishing victims for an abuser's violence.

> **Work and Income refused to give me emergency housing because I had a home, which I did, but I had to leave because it was unsafe.**

Lack of Visibility

In light of the indisputable intersections between IPV and victims' homelessness,[vi] the absence of a gender and violence informed housing policy arguably represents a profound systemic failure. The 'Tightening the Gateway' policy has made access to the emergency housing system even more limited. Urgent recognition and response is required: one that addresses the growing disparities in the availability and suitability of emergency accommodation for women who have experienced IPV. This call to action is not a new one – organisations and advocacy groups such as the Coalition to End Women's Homelessness have long since sounded the alarm on the consequences of the continuation of violence-blind emergency (and broader) housing system policies.[28]

At present, there is no specific policy that reconciles women's homelessness, IPV victimisation, and emergency housing across any government workstream. Even within the second Te *Aorerekura Action Plan for 2025-2030: Breaking the Cycle of Violence,* housing is only mentioned in relation to kaupapa Māori sexual violence services providing holistic services that sometimes include access to housing.[29] The fact that access to the emergency accommodation is critical for enabling safety for victims of family violence goes unaddressed – despite acknowledgement (albeit footnoted) of gendered need.



[iv] From risk information collected from 5000 clients across 2024/25.
[v] Victims of IPV should never feel forced to disclose their experience – some may not know how, feel able, or feel safe to do so (Thorburn et al., 2025).
[vi] See next section 'Additional Context: The emergency housing system in Aotearoa; Intimate partner violence and homelessness'.

What was the most helpful thing that was done for you?



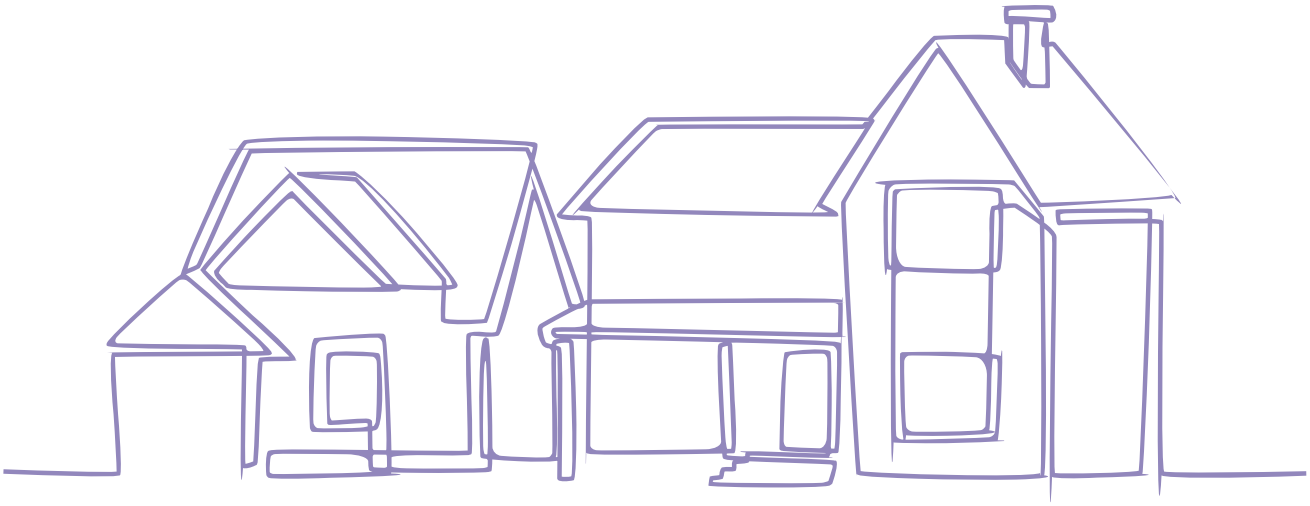
Helped me into new accommodation quickly.

Giving me emergency housing.

As those at the Coalition to End Women's Homelessness have often asserted, while emergency accommodation may not be an ideal environment for IPV victims, **it is a vital service.** Our data shows the extreme isolation of victims who access the emergency housing system. These women rely on the availability of formal support services because the perpetrator's violence has usually restricted all other pathways for help.

There is a need to provide additional funding for more appropriate housing services, such as *Transitional Housing*. At present, there are limited women-only housing spaces across the country, and as funding for transitional housing has slowed, the availability of such spaces is even more restricted. Alternatively, more resourcing could be allocated to the Ministry of Justice funded *Whānau Protect – National Home Safety Service*.[vii] While not touted as a housing initiative, Whānau Protect enables some victims and their children to remain living in their homes following separation from a violent partner. Ideally these alternatives to emergency accommodation would provide holistic support designed specifically for women's needs, with priority given to mothers and women who have experienced violence (in many cases, these groups overlap). Such support is essential because the emergency housing system is a vital gateway to safety.[30]

[vii] Victims are eligible only if they are the highest risk for severe or lethal violence and they live separately from the perpetrator. Clients' homes are provided with physical security upgrades (if the property owner agrees this can include new doors, locks, window stays etc.) and they receive a monitored home/pendant alarm for six months.



Summary

'Tightening the Gateway' has the potential to close the door to safety for IPV victims who face homelessness when fleeing, or separating from, their violent partner. While many housing policies, both current and historic, have been broadly criticised for failing to cater to the specific physical, mental, and cultural needs of those most likely to use the service, the implementation of 'Tightening the Gateway' threatens to exclude many of those most at need entirely.

The possible consequence of this policy change is that victims may be declined emergency housing for reasons **stemming from the violence of a perpetrator**. In the best case, it adds only to the already immense time burdens that victims of violence face when they seek help and, in the worst case, it actively increases victims' and their children's risk of homelessness, or their risk of severe or lethal violence when trying to separate from a violent partner.

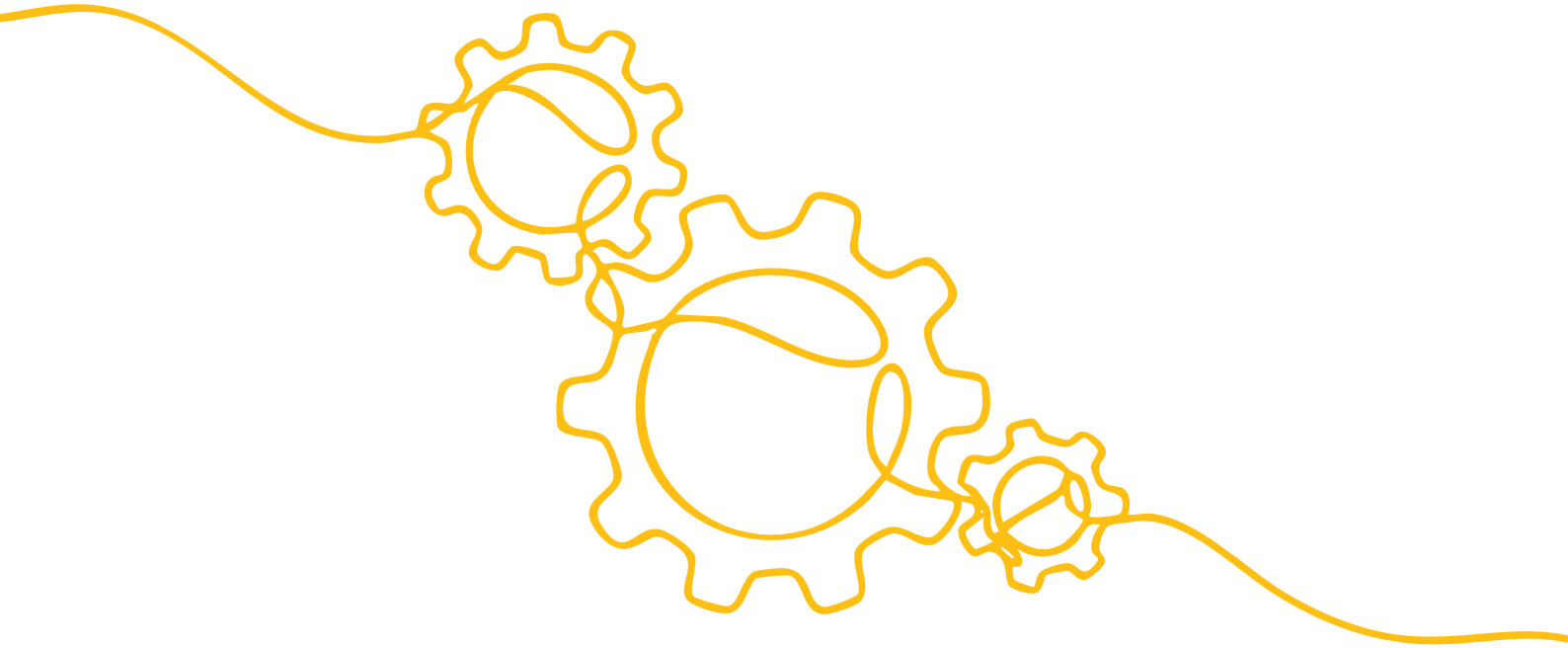
IPV is a major cause of homelessness for women and their children. The ways in which the state-resourced emergency housing system is run has the power to either add to risk or facilitate safety in the lives of IPV victims and their children. The current direction of 'Tightening the Gateway' is channelling that power down the wrong pathway.

> **We [woman and her young child] literally had nowhere to go so we had to go back to my ex-partner's house.**

> **Secure housing is the only thing that matters, most of all.**

Additional Context





The Emergency Housing System in Aotearoa

The stated purpose of the emergency housing system in Aotearoa is to provide "short term accommodation for people who need it because they can't stay where they are, and they have nowhere else to go".[31] To be eligible for emergency accommodation a person must have documented financial hardship and have an immediate housing need.[32] Emergency accommodation entails immediate placement in commercial accommodation such as a motel or hostel.[33] It was intended that these placements would only be for short-term stays up to seven days, but most people remain in emergency housing for around three to six months.[34]

Emergency accommodation is just one aspect of the state response to homelessness in Aotearoa. However, it is a key resource for those with urgent housing needs – this includes victims of IPV. As soon as a woman and her children leave a home where they are unsafe, they become homeless.[35] For some victims, the emergency housing system is a vital pathway to safety.

Intimate Partner Violence and Homelessness

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pervasive issue that causes devastating harm in Aotearoa. It is a form of gendered violence, meaning that it is disproportionately experienced by women and gender minorities (and their children) and disproportionately perpetrated by men.[36] IPV is a pattern of coercive behaviours (physical, sexual, and psychological) that a perpetrator uses to gain and maintain power and control over their victim(s).[37] While individuals are always responsible for their choice to enact violence, it is important to recognise that IPV is also socially sustained – broader social and systemic norms influence the understanding, tolerance, and excusal of IPV across society.[38] As such, victims are socially entrapped by gendered violence – unequal distribution of power within households, communities and systems, and the accrual and misuse of that power enables perpetrators to control and trap victims in violent relationships.

Access to alternative housing is a key pathway to safety, and conversely, the risk of homelessness

exacerbates victims' entrapment in relationships with abusers. Firstly, perpetrators use tactics that target a victim's ability to leave the relationship and limit alternative housing options. The data presented in this paper affirms this as an impact of violence.

Women's Refuge risk data also provides insights into these sorts of tactics. For example, 80.9 percent of IPV victims accessing Refuge are isolated from friends and family by perpetrators; isolation can restrict a victim's ability to access informal housing options (e.g. staying with friends or family). Perpetrators also target a victim's ability to access private accommodation options through control of finances (48.7% of Refuge clients faced this tactic of violence).

Secondly, victims' entrapment in IPV can be furthered by unhelpful or harmful system responses.[39] Any restrictions put in place that limit access to crisis or emergency housing services contribute to victims' entrapment by impeding their pathways to safety. Figure 6 shows the immense, and often invisible, time and capacity demand that engaging with services requires. Nearly 60 percent of victims who accessed ETH also reported that services had unrealistic expectations of them. These, along with a lack of timeliness, or any other factor that impedes access to the emergency housing system, arguably reinforce this systemic entrapment.

Lastly, it is important to recognise the socio-structural contributions to the entrapment of IPV victims. In Aotearoa, colonisation (both historic and ongoing) and gender inequality are core drivers of IPV and family violence more broadly. IPV has the most severe impacts on those who are devalued and undermined by these ongoing drivers;[viii] those with the least socio-structural power are the most entrapped by overarching systems of oppression.[40] Available data shows that Māori and Pacific people are overrepresented in the emergency housing system, as are disabled people, and people from takatāpui and rainbow communities.[41] Based on international trends, victims of IPV are also overrepresented (though this information is not collected within Aotearoa).[42] The crossovers between those with the least socio-structural power, those who experience IPV, and those within the emergency housing system means that any policy changes to the emergency housing system will disproportionately affect those who are already put at the greatest risk and who have the greatest need.

This paper follows several calls to action over recent changes to emergency accommodation policies. Efforts to tighten the gateway into emergency accommodation have weakened one of the core (state-provided) safety nets for women attempting to seek safety from their violent partners for which there are typically few or no alternative options.

[vii] For example, women, wāhine and tamariki Māori, women of colour, migrant women, rainbow and takatāpui communities, and disabled people.

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