



11 September 2026

OIA 0110

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

I refer to your request received on 17 August 2026, which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). You requested the following information:

To assist our understanding of the current program of work in relation to Recommendations 57–64, we would appreciate receiving:

- 1. The Terms of Reference for the Steering and Reference Governance Group (SCRG);*
- 2. Information regarding the SCRG's membership, role, reporting arrangements, and current work program;*
- 3. The Terms of Reference for Workstream One: Workforce Capability; Workstream Two: Workforce Suitability, and Workstream Three: Reporting and Visibility;*
- 4. Information regarding the scope, membership and timelines for each work group; and*
- 5. Any publicly available reports, discussion papers, work plans, or other documents that may assist stakeholders to understand and engage with the process.*

We have numbered the different parts of your request for ease of reference. Additionally, we have interpreted parts one and two of your request to be asking for information relating to the Care Sector Reference Group (CSRG). We are unaware of any group called the Steering and Reference Governance Group.

The CSRG is an advisory group of representatives from across the care sector that provides input and feedback on work to strengthen the safety and capability of New Zealand's care workforce. The CSRG helps inform the development of policy and operational options across workforce capability, workforce suitability, and reporting and visibility of abuse and neglect in care settings.

Response to your request

- 1. The Terms of Reference for the Steering and Reference Governance Group (SCRG);*
- 2. Information regarding the SCRG's membership, role, reporting arrangements, and current work program;*

Please find the attached Terms of Reference for the CSRG which contains information about the scope of work, roles and responsibilities, and the list of members.

The CSRG has met four times between February and April 2026. Over these meetings the CSRG provided feedback on proposed approaches to strengthening care safety and safeguarding across the care workforce. Their feedback was a useful input into the work that agencies undertook to develop the first set of safeguarding initiatives (see further details below).

3. The Terms of Reference for Workstream One: Workforce Capability, Workstream Two: Workforce Suitability, and Workstream Three: Reporting and Visibility;

The Crown Response Office is working with the care agencies (Ministry of Health, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Social Development including Disability Support Service, Ministry of Education, and Health New Zealand) on a work programme to build a safe and capable workforce (see information about funding allocated for this work below).

The scope of the three interrelated workstreams is:

- Workstream one: Workforce capability – ensuring the care workforce has the right skills and capabilities to prevent, identify, report and respond to abuse and neglect in care settings.
- Workstream two: Workforce suitability – ensuring the care workforce is regularly and effectively checking the safety and suitability of people working in care settings.
- Workstream three: Reporting and visibility – ensuring incidents of alleged/suspected abuse and neglect occurring within care settings are reported and responded to appropriately.

There is no Terms of Reference for these workstreams. Therefore, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information does not exist.

4. Information regarding the scope, membership and timelines for each work group; and

Care agencies are working together across strategic and operational policy settings to progress the Crown Response to the workforce-related recommendations made by the Royal Commission. To date, agencies have prioritised work under workstream one, with a focus on building the capability of the care workforce, beginning with investment in critical capability-building initiatives across care sectors (see below).

This work is being delivered alongside initial analytical work on other workforce recommendations, including checking the safety and suitability of the care workforce (workstream two), and strengthening reporting and visibility mechanisms (workstream three). Further advice on this work is expected to be provided to Ministers in 2027.

Budget 2025 allocated \$70.88 million to establish a safe and capable care workforce. Delegated Ministers have recently approved the first package of workforce capability-building initiatives, led by the Ministry of Social Development. The \$16.8 million package combines system-wide safeguarding initiatives with targeted initiatives for disability care and support settings.

These initiatives are intended to strengthen safeguarding capability across the care workforce and support workers, carers, and organisations to prevent, identify, and respond to abuse and neglect. Work to design the initiatives has started.

Further information about these initiatives is available on the Crown Response Office website in our August 2026 Pānui [here](#) and on the Disability Support Services website [here](#).

Final decisions have not yet been made on funding for any additional capability-building initiatives or on workforce suitability and reporting.

5. *Any publicly available reports, discussion papers, work plans, or other documents that may assist stakeholders to understand and engage with the process.*

Following the 10 August 2026 Pānui (linked above) our intention is to proactively release papers relating to the Government's response to Whanaketia recommendations 57-64. We will notify you when these papers are released.

One recently released Cabinet paper titled *Implementing a cross-system care safety framework* addresses gaps in how care safety is monitored, enforced and assured across New Zealand's care system, and seeks to establish a more consistent cross-system approach to preventing abuse and neglect in care settings. Cabinet was asked to agree to targeted consultation on options for implementing a cross-system care safety framework, including potential overarching legislation and a statutory duty of care, with detailed proposals to be reported back by April 2027. This paper can be found on our website [here](#).

We are currently finalising the Crown Response Annual Report (Annual Report) for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, which is scheduled for publication on our website on 30 September 2026. The Annual Report provides a high-level overview of progress implementing the Crown Response Plan and responding to the recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions. The previous Annual Report and half year report can be found on our website [here](#).

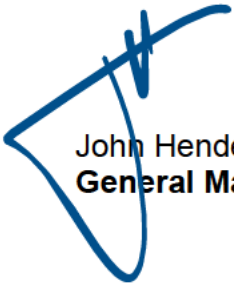
You may also be interested in the documents submitted during the Budget 2025 process which discuss initiatives and funding options for building a diverse, capable and safe care workforce. These documents can be found in [part one](#) and [part two](#) of a published OIA response.

We may publish this OIA response on www.abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz (with your personal details having been removed). Publishing responses to OIA requests increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the

purpose of the OIA to enable effective participation in the making and administration of law and policies, and to promote the accountability of Ministers and officials.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available via www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'John Henderson', written over a blue ink outline of a triangle.

John Henderson
General Manager Enabling Services

Published by the Crown Response Office

Build a Safe and Capable Care Workforce

Care Sector Reference Group: Draft Terms of Reference

Background

The Royal Commission into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions (the Royal Commission) is one of the most significant inquiries in Aotearoa New Zealand's history. It uncovered decades of systemic abuse and neglect of children, young people, and vulnerable adults in State and faith-based care, revealing deep institutional failures.

As part of its response, in Budget 2025 the Government committed up to \$71.5 million to lift the safety and capability of the care workforce. The Ministries of Health, Education, Social Development (including Disability Support Services), Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki (care agencies) are working together with the Crown Response Office to develop and implement initiatives, as part of Building a Safe and Capable Workforce project (the project). The project has three workstreams:

1. workforce capability
2. checking the suitability of the care workforce; and
3. reporting and ensuring visibility of abuse and neglect.

In order to achieve its aims, the project:

- recognises the diverse care settings within its scope including disability, aged care, education, health, youth, and social services sectors. Safeguarding responsibilities in these different care contexts can operate alongside established clinical governance, professional regulatory responsibilities and statutory oversight frameworks
- requires meaningful engagement with partners and stakeholders to ensure that reforms are effective and enduring. Engagement will be ongoing throughout the project and is intended to have genuine impact on its direction and outcomes.

Purpose

Joint Ministers have agreed to the setting up of a Care Sector Reference Group (CSRG) comprising of a small number of representatives to enable sector input into the development of options. This is intended to be a group of organisational representatives across the care sector to inform the three workstreams that make up this project.

Objective

The objective of the CSRG is to create a forum of diverse workforce organisations that can reach into their respective constituents to contribute to the development of

work in a way that enables an effective and lasting response that is supported and trusted by the Care Workforce Sector.

Approach

In undertaking its work, the CSRG members acknowledge that care settings differ significantly in regulatory structure, workforce composition, clinical acuity and statutory oversight. Input from CSRG members will reflect their unique and variable care contexts, and the diversity of input will support the development of options that

- Avoid duplication of existing regulatory requirements
- Are proportionate to risk
- Uphold employment law and natural justice
- Consider workforce sustainability and recruitment impacts.
- Complement related reform work including the Dame Karen Poutasi review.

Reflecting the different care contexts in which organisations operate, there will likely be different priorities and concerns among members. The group does not need to come to a single view on any particular matter. The Group's role is to ensure the breadth of perspective is understood, highlighting alignment and areas of difference.

Scope

The CSRG will engage with the Workforce project teams directly, providing input across each of the three workstreams.

Input may also be sought into the wider Care Safety programme of work, as required. The intention is to engage with sector groups to help with the development of options, and to test thinking on a practical level for initiatives and implementation.

The CSRG is advisory and will not have decision making powers or be binding on the Government.

CSRG attendees may undertake additional engagement within their organisations outside of these meetings as required, the inputs from which will be considered alongside inputs provided by the CSRG.

We note that engagement with the community, including those receiving support in diverse care settings, will take place outside of this forum. CSRG members are not expected to represent the perspectives of care-experience people, though members are welcome to contribute relevant knowledge.

Furthermore, work with Te Tiriti partners will occur across the breadth of this project.

Membership

The CSRG is intended to provide a cross section of workforce organisations from across the care sector. In order to increase the workability of meetings, the membership relates to identified organisations rather

than specific individuals from these organisations. This enables numbers of attendees to be contained while ensuring the right inputs on the various workstreams and using the outreach potential of their respective constituents in bringing diverse views to the CSRG.

Members to the group have been nominated by the care agencies. Additional members can be added to the group, subject to the agreement of the Workforce Managers Group. Appendix 1 has the list of member organisations.

Roles and Responsibilities

CSRG Member Organisations:

- Nominate a key contact for liaison with the Crown Response Office
- Identify and confirm the most appropriate attendee for each meeting based on the agenda items for that meeting.
- Ensure a suitable representative prepares for, and attends, each meeting.
- Respect confidentiality of specific topics discussed at the meeting, including as requested by other members.
- Provide input into, and feedback on documents as requested.
- Declare any conflict of interest or potential conflicts of interest that may arise.

Meetings

Meetings will primarily take place online, through the Teams platform. Face to face meetings will be considered, as appropriate.

The CSRG will meet monthly and dates for meetings will be circulated as far in advance as possible.

Where necessary, additional one-off meetings may be arranged to progress particular initiatives. Any such meetings will be communicated to the group as early as possible to ensure they can be accommodated by the Group.

The Crown Response Office will provide a facilitator for each meeting, and provide administrative support, including sending out agendas and meeting notes. The Crown Response Office will also be responsible for ensuring accountability, record-keeping and that official information requirements are met.

Duration

The CSRG will be established in February 2026 for an initial six months, with a review following that to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Communication and Reporting

Communication with members, excluding circulating papers/agendas will occur via email to their designated email address.

Members will receive meeting notes following each meeting to ensure their feedback has been captured accurately. The Crown Response Office will provide feedback to the CSRG outlining how its input has informed advice to Ministers, including where alternative views were considered but not adopted.

Conflict of Interest

All member organisations are required to have a completed conflicts of interest declaration and background checks for any individual representative (including criminal records check), to the satisfaction of the Crown Response Office.

All actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be lodged with the Crown Response Office. In the event of a potential conflict, the Crown Response Office, along with the Manager's Group will determine how best to manage it. The Crown Response Office will also maintain a Reference Group Member Conflict of Interest Register.

Other matters

Confidentiality and information sharing

- Information, including agendas and meeting papers, will be shared via password protected SharePoint links. Access to this SharePoint folder will be provided to each Member Organisations nominated liaison.
- The CSRG members should assume that all information presented to the group, whether written or in oral form, is confidential and may not be made public.
- If there is a desire to release the information, officials will seek agreement from the Crown Response Office and anyone who supplied confidential information for confidentiality to be waived.
- Where information is already in the public domain (through no fault of a member or observer), the confidentiality requirements do not apply to that information.
- Members and observers must comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act 2020 and keep information about identifiable individuals confidential.
- All information provided to the CSRG will be treated as official information under the Official Information Act 1982 and, subject to the requirements of that Act, may be released to the public if there are no grounds for withholding it.

Media and public forums

- CSG members may identify themselves as members of the CSG.
- A CSG member may not comment on the business of the CSG.

Conditions of Appointment

- Each member organisation is appointed by the Crown Response Office.
- A member organisation may resign from the CSG by informing the Crown Response Office in writing.
- The Crown Response Office can review and amend these Terms of Reference but in the event of doing so, will do so in consultation with the CSG.

Finalising and updating the Terms of Reference.

The draft Terms of Reference will be confirmed following their review by the CSG at its first meeting.

Any updates or amendments to the CSG can be made through agreement with the Workforce Managers Group.

Appendix 1 - Care Sector Reference Group Membership

1. Ara Taiohi
2. Open Polytechnic
3. NZ Disability Support Network (NZD SN)
4. Careerforce
5. Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand
6. Aotearoa New Zealand Social Workers Association
7. Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA)
8. New Zealand Aged Care Association
9. New Zealand Social Work Registration Board (SWRB)
10. Special Education Principals New Zealand
11. Home and Community Health Association
12. New Zealand Health Group
13. Platform Trust