



SOMEWHERE TRUSTED TO TURN:

NEW ZEALAND'S FIRST ONLINE

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMME



*In partnership with RISE Living Safe*

MARCH 2026

MOONSHOTTEAM.COM

---



Moonshot is the global leader in online safety, empowering people to thrive online. We deliver initiatives to empower the public to keep themselves safe from online threats, reaching over 300 million people across the globe. Since 2015, Moonshot has pioneered the field of online violence prevention, leading multi-year partnerships with governments and major technology platforms to connect people at-risk of violence with lifesaving services. This work is delivered to the highest data privacy standards, and always protects the civil liberties of online audiences. Our work is rooted in the fundamental belief that change is possible. Moonshot operates globally from four offices: Dublin, London, Toronto, and Washington D.C.



RISE Living Safe is a specialist family violence prevention organisation in New Zealand with more than 38 years of experience helping individuals and whānau seek and achieve real, lasting change. Accredited by the Ministry of Social Development, Oranga Tamariki, the Ministry of Justice, and the Department of Corrections, RISE works with people who use violence as well as those who experience it - recognising that sustainable change requires support for the entire whānau. RISE's multi-disciplinary team of clinicians, social workers, and psychotherapists serves communities across the top of the South Island, and delivering services nationally through online support to ensure New Zealanders across the country can access free, confidential, and non-judgemental support from trained local practitioners.



## Overview

**New Zealanders are encountering violent content online at scale, and many do not know where to turn.** According to a recent study by the Classification Office, two-thirds of adults have seen extreme or illegal content.<sup>1</sup> One in ten has been harmed by what they saw. Moonshot's research demonstrates that across all age groups, people are searching online for help with violent or aggressive young people in their lives.

**In 2025, New Zealand launched its first nationwide early intervention service for online violence.** Between 31 March and 31 December 2025, the New Zealand Online Violence Prevention Programme placed 2.7 million offers of support in front of people at critical moments: those searching for or consuming harmful content, and those worried about someone they know or care about. Over 7,000 visited the support service websites and 25 individuals most in need reached out directly to trained counsellors, including parents and grandparents seeking help with violent teenagers, and individuals facing unemployment, debt, and isolation.

The programme continues to generate important findings on engagement with violent content across New Zealand, and opportunities to offer support to those affected by online violence. It demonstrates that early intervention for online violence is achievable at a national scale. People who are consuming harmful content, or who are worried about someone who is, will accept help when it is offered at the right moment and in the right way.

The programme is delivered by Moonshot, in partnership with RISE Living Safe, with the support of the New Zealand Government, and has been running since December 2023. It is supported by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) and the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).

1. Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu (2026) [Online exposure: Experiences of extreme or illegal content in Aotearoa](#). Wellington, NZ: Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu



## Key Findings

### 1 Reaching individuals consuming violent or violence-inciting content



**Gore and extreme violence content consumption represent the most critical intervention opportunities**, with gore queries driving nearly half of all engagements with offers of support.



**When real-world violence occurs in New Zealand or globally, online consumption of violence-inciting content surges immediately.** These surges offer critical intervention points to reach people at the right time with dedicated support resources.



**People consuming violence-inciting content respond best to messaging which acknowledges their emotional state.** They engage most with offers of support that acknowledge feelings of stress, overwhelm, isolation, and social alienation.



**However, those seeking gore content are most receptive to offers of support that directly acknowledge their violent thoughts.** Individuals consuming gore content are often conscious that they are consuming socially unacceptable content that may negatively impact them. There is an opportunity to be more direct with them on the impacts of consuming violent content.



**Populations consuming violent or violence-inciting content are not confined to major cities** but are spread across the country. This means people living in the regions also require access to support services.



**While younger people are more likely to seek out violent content online,** older age groups consistently show higher engagement with offers of support.



## 2 Mobilising community support



**Families are seeking help for what they can see.** Bystanders—people who have noticed worrying behaviour in someone they know—respond to visible violent behaviour and are not equipped to recognise less visible signs or underlying drivers.



**Women are far more likely to engage with bystander support services than men.** The overwhelming majority of people who reach out for help concerning a loved one are women. This also points to a gap: empowering more men to recognise warning signs and seek help remains critical.



**People living in the regions show unexpectedly high levels of concern** about violent behaviours, indicating a need for improving online access to bystander services.

## 3 Connecting with support services



**Privacy and confidentiality concerns are critical** for both people consuming violent content and concerned bystanders. Questions about confidentiality and independence from authorities receiving highest attention on the service provider websites.



**Bystanders remain motivated to seek help for people they know or care about over extended periods, while people consuming violent content have fleeting windows of receptiveness** that demand immediate engagement—making rapid intervention essential for reaching them when they are open to support.



**Referrals to support services rarely centre on violence as a single issue**, with families describing multiple intersecting crises.



## Introduction

New Zealanders are increasingly encountering harmful content online. In January 2026, the New Zealand Classification Office published a landmark study that demonstrated two-thirds of New Zealand adults have encountered extreme or illegal content online.<sup>2</sup> For young people aged 18–24, that figure rises to 82%. The content itself ranges from graphic violence and gore to material promoting terrorism, violent extremism, and sexual violence. Between 31 March and 31 December 2025, Moonshot found that New Zealanders sought or accessed online content inciting or encouraging violence over 170,000 times across four platforms.

Engagement with violent content online is not always intentional. In fact, the Classification Office has noted that most of this exposure is unintentional: content surfacing through social media feeds, suggested videos, or links shared by others. One in ten New Zealanders reports being harmed by what they saw.<sup>3</sup> Repeated exposure to such material can be distressing and, for some, may reinforce harmful beliefs. Without the correct support or services to turn to in that moment of need, individuals may find themselves gravitating towards more harmful or dangerous online spaces. This underscores the importance of ensuring non-judgemental access to services for those exposed to violent content online, regardless of how or why this content was consumed.

A small number of individuals may demonstrate concerning behaviours on the pathway to violence. Social media algorithms and online amplification of violent content have transformed how quickly this pathway can develop, but they have also created a critical window of opportunity to intervene early: to mitigate risk factors and enhance protective factors before an individual moves further along that path.<sup>4</sup>

There is a growing international evidence base demonstrating that individuals on the pathway to violence may be receptive to violence prevention services when offered online.<sup>5</sup> This can be an effective means of reaching populations who would otherwise be hard to reach, including those living in rural settings, those who may be resistant to in-person interactions, and those who are otherwise immersed in their online environment.

Another critical window of opportunity to intervene early occurs in everyday settings: within families, schools, community settings where parents, educators, and peers may be concerned about someone in their lives. These are concerned bystanders—people who have noticed worrying behaviour in someone they know and are looking for guidance on how to help. They are often among the first to recognise that something is wrong. Bystanders can be parents, grandparents, partners, siblings, friends, classmates, teachers, or colleagues: anyone with a close personal or professional relationship with someone displaying concerning behaviour. One of the first places bystanders turn to, as they seek information, support, or guidance, is the internet.

2. Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu (2026) [Online exposure: Experiences of extreme or illegal content in Aotearoa](#). Wellington, NZ: Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu.
3. Ibid.
4. Moonshot (2025) [Adapting Violence Prevention to the Digital World: A Framework for Action](#). London, UK.
5. Ibid.



Moonshot has found that concern about violence in young people is widespread across generations in New Zealand. The most common online searches by bystanders of all ages were for help with violent or aggressive children and teenagers: terms like “help for violent teens”, “my child is aggressive and violent”, and “what to do with an aggressive child”. Parents and grandparents are searching for support with a young person whose behaviour worries them. Among younger searchers, a common concern was violence among peers, including searches like “student threatens to kill another student”.

Though search engines yield a range of results on the topic, these results are not assessed or verified by the platforms as reliable sources of information. There is a real need for information that is safe, vetted, and reliable to support bystanders on a range of online platforms where they seek help.

These are the gaps the New Zealand Online Violence Prevention Programme set out to address. The programme aims to ensure violence prevention services are delivered early and efficiently online to individuals who may need them most, including those consuming violent content online and concerned bystanders seeking help. Yet, reaching people online is only part of the challenge. When someone is ready to ask for help, they need somewhere trusted to turn.

This is where the role of a trusted local service provider is critical to this approach. RISE Living Safe (RISE) is a New Zealand family violence prevention organisation with over 38 years of experience. RISE works with individuals and families navigating complex and often urgent situations. Their multi-disciplinary team of clinicians, social workers, and psychotherapists brings both the professional expertise and the human understanding this work requires. Moonshot and RISE worked to design the service and outreach plan together, ensuring that every aspect of the programme—from the advertising to the support pathways—was shaped by practitioners who would be delivering it. This approach builds on evidence from similar Moonshot programmes in Australia, Canada, and the United States.<sup>6</sup>



## What is the New Zealand Online Violence Prevention Programme?

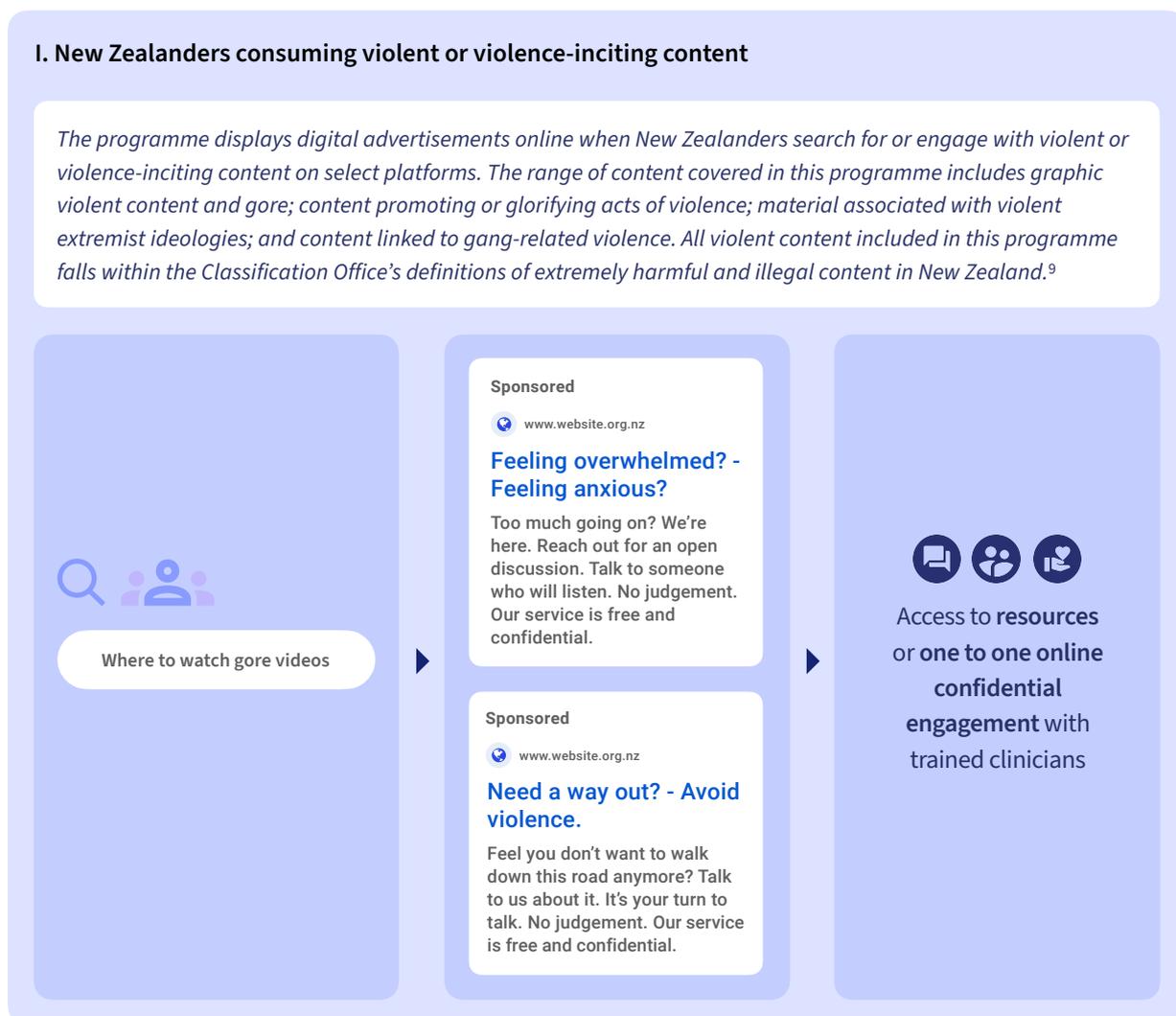
The New Zealand Online Violence Prevention Programme is designed to connect vulnerable individuals and concerned bystanders who are online with professional support services at critical moments. Rather than waiting for concerning behaviour to escalate, the programme offers support where the pathway to violence often begins: in digital spaces where grievances are validated, violent content is consumed, and violent narratives are reinforced. It also serves concerned bystanders who may be struggling to cope with a loved one consuming violent or violence-inciting content and in need of support.

The programme uses digital advertising to place offers of support in front of people at two critical moments: (I) when they are searching for or viewing harmful content online, or (II) when they are looking for help with someone they are worried about (see Figure 1). These advertisements offer free, confidential support, independent from law enforcement. If individuals click through, they reach a dedicated website built specifically for a New Zealand audience, offering access to free professional services provided by RISE.

6. Ibid.

All advertisements were designed in collaboration with RISE clinicians and aim to be non-judgemental, acknowledging the emotional drivers behind violent content consumption. This approach, tested across comparable programmes in Australia, Canada, and the United States, consistently outperforms other public health messaging approaches when offered to individuals consuming violent content.<sup>7</sup> International research has demonstrated that asking questions about these emotional drivers is particularly effective; emotional drivers may include stress, feelings of isolation, or fear and anxiety.<sup>8</sup> This messaging meets people where they are emotionally as they consume this content, not where we assume they should be.

▼ **Figure 1: Digital Outreach Approach**



7. Moonshot (2025) *Adapting Violence Prevention to the Digital World: A Framework for Action*. London, UK.

8. Ibid.

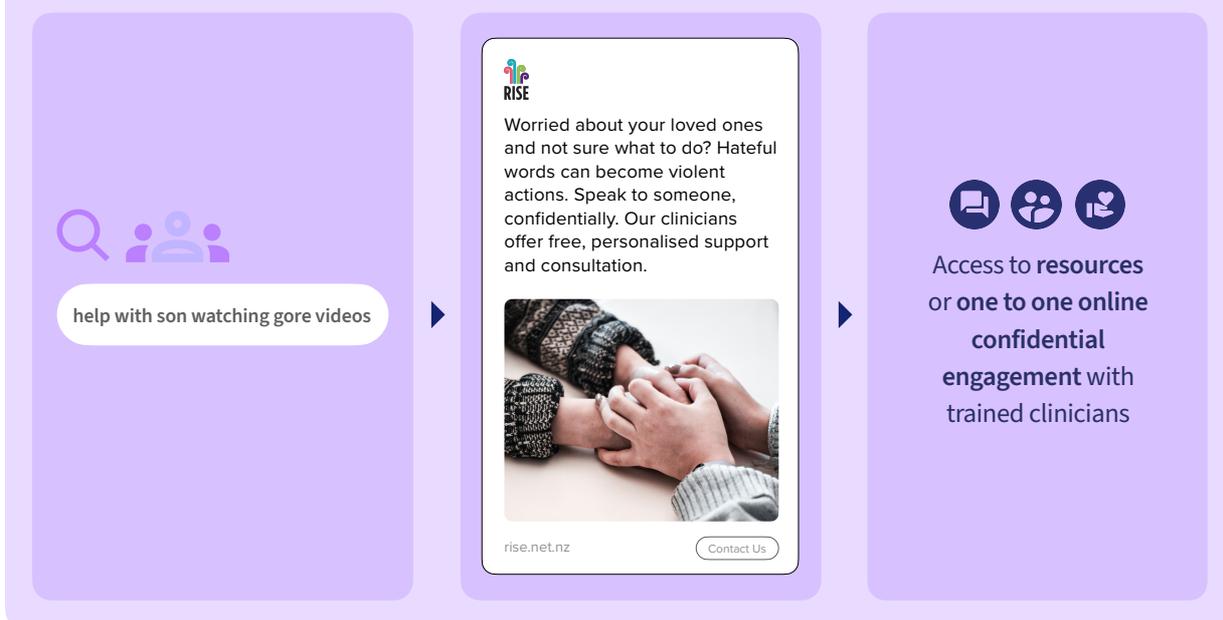
9. Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu (2026) *What is harmful and illegal content?*

## II. Concerned bystanders

The programme reaches bystanders in two distinct ways:

**(a) Active bystanders:** Advertisements reach people who are actively searching for help—those with an immediate concern about someone they know; and

**(b) Bystander communities:** Advertisements are placed within parenting and educator communities to reach people who may not yet have concerns, or may not yet recognise that the behaviour they are observing warrants support, but who are precisely those most likely to need it. This preventative reach, building awareness before a moment of crisis, is deliberate in its design. A bystander who has already encountered the service is far more likely to reach out when they need it than one who must independently identify and locate appropriate support in a moment of crisis.



Engagement with the advertised services is entirely voluntary. People choose to access support when they are ready, and many take time to assess whether the service can be trusted before making contact. Signposting services to these communities reduces barriers to accessing support and ensures they are aware that trusted services are available. The websites are designed to be trauma-informed, with privacy and confidentiality questions addressed directly. People can choose how they make contact: via live chat, text, email, or contact form.

While digital advertising is available on many online platforms, the first year of this programme has focused on Google Search, YouTube, Reddit, and other platforms where violent or violence-inciting content is widely accessible. Outreach is based on content New Zealanders engage with online, never on the basis of age, race, gender, or location within New Zealand. Every advertisement is positioned based on specific online actions—the content someone was actively seeking or consuming at that moment. This approach respects privacy and self-determination. The programme only accesses anonymous and publicly available data, and the methodology is fully compliant with New Zealand’s Privacy Act 2020.



## Outcomes

When people were offered support online at critical moments, thousands responded. Over the course of nine months, the programme placed **2.7 million offers of support** in front of New Zealanders. Over **7,000 people** visited the support websites. **Twenty-five people** reached out directly to trained counsellors at RISE.

### 📍 New Zealanders consuming violent or violence-inciting content



From 31 March to 31 December 2025, the programme made 178,717 offers of support in moments where New Zealanders were consuming violent or violence-inciting content across four platforms. People consuming violent content clicked on the offers of support over 4,000 times and 759 people engaged with the RISE website offering support services. Of these, eight people reached out to request help. The programme aims to ensure anyone immersed in violent environments on these four platforms is offered access to support, and those most in need can speak to a trained counsellor. In its first nine months, the programme achieved this objective.

The programme has generated valuable findings on the receptiveness of New Zealanders to offers of support in the spaces where they may otherwise consume violent or violence-inciting material.

#### 📍 **Gore content is increasingly common, and those consuming gore are receptive to offers of support**

Nearly half (49%) of all engagements with the offers of support on Google were by people searching for graphic violent content, demonstrating that people consuming this kind of material are receptive to offers of assistance. We found that these audiences were most receptive to advertisements that explicitly acknowledged their fixation on violent content, as compared to advertisements that asked about their emotional state in a more abstract way.

#### 📍 **People consuming gang-related content are most receptive to offers of support**

People engaging with gang-related content, particularly those related to Mongrel Mob merchandise and imagery, had the highest engagement rates with offers of support across the programme. This was closely followed by incel content and violent anti-Māori content.

#### 📍 **Individuals deeply embedded in violent communities online show consistent engagement with support messaging**

While most exposure to violent content in New Zealand is unintentional,<sup>10</sup> there are communities of individuals across New Zealand who navigate directly to specific sites hosting violence-inciting content.

10. Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu (2026) [Online exposure: Experiences of extreme or illegal content in Aotearoa](#). Wellington, NZ: Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu.



This pattern was consistent across different forms of violence: 80% of gore-related searches were for specific website names, while incel and violent anti-Semitic searches focused on established forums. A smaller subset of people displayed intentional discovery behaviour, using generic search terms like “where to watch gore videos”, searching for alternatives to defunct platforms or using Reddit as a gateway to find violent material. The population actively consuming the most violent content, including viewers of violent extremist channels, maintained a stable engagement rate throughout the programme, proving that even those most immersed in harmful material remain receptive to help.

### ▷ **Disengagement from violent communities and violence-planning searches reveal critical intervention windows**

People actively seeking to exit violent and incel communities or find support groups generated 46 impressions and five engagements—small numbers that represent profound moments of receptiveness to help. Meanwhile, violence-planning searches like “how do you make an explosive” triggered 27 offers of support with zero engagements, yet their very presence confirms that New Zealanders do use search engines when contemplating harm.

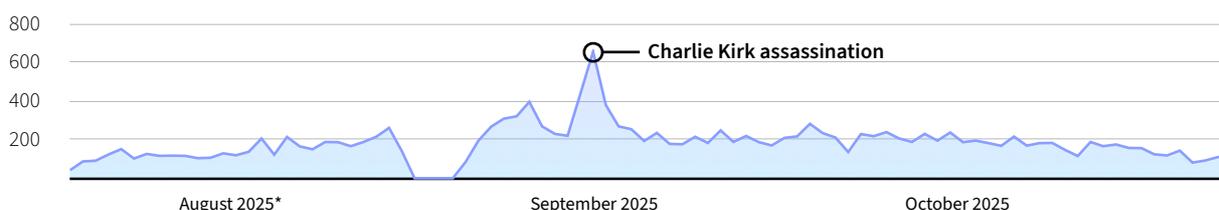
### ▷ **Video-sharing platforms like YouTube and niche hosting sites present critical opportunities to reach those consuming racist violent content**

Racist violence content does not face the same swift removal as gore and shock content through moderation on mainstream platforms like YouTube, and therefore remains accessible on the platform. On niche video hosting sites, people consuming racist violence content accounted for 80% of the total engagements with offers of support. Audiences consuming this content responded more to advertisements for support, which referenced feelings of anxiety, stress, or loneliness.

### ▷ **Global events trigger immediate online consumption of extreme content, creating moments of heightened vulnerability**

Following the fatal shooting of Charlie Kirk in the United States on 10 September 2025, searches for gore websites within New Zealand surged to nearly eight times typical daily volume, as individuals sought footage of the incident (see Figure 2). The programme was able to provide immediate offers of support at the exact moment people were engaging with this harmful material—capturing them at their point of greatest vulnerability. Surges in engagement with violent content can be unpredictable, and offers of support must be available on an ongoing basis to ensure these fleeting windows of opportunity to intervene are not missed.

▼ **Figure 2: Volume of offers of support for New Zealanders consuming violent graphic content online**



\*The brief dip in late August reflects a planned short-term pause in weekend programme activity during this period.

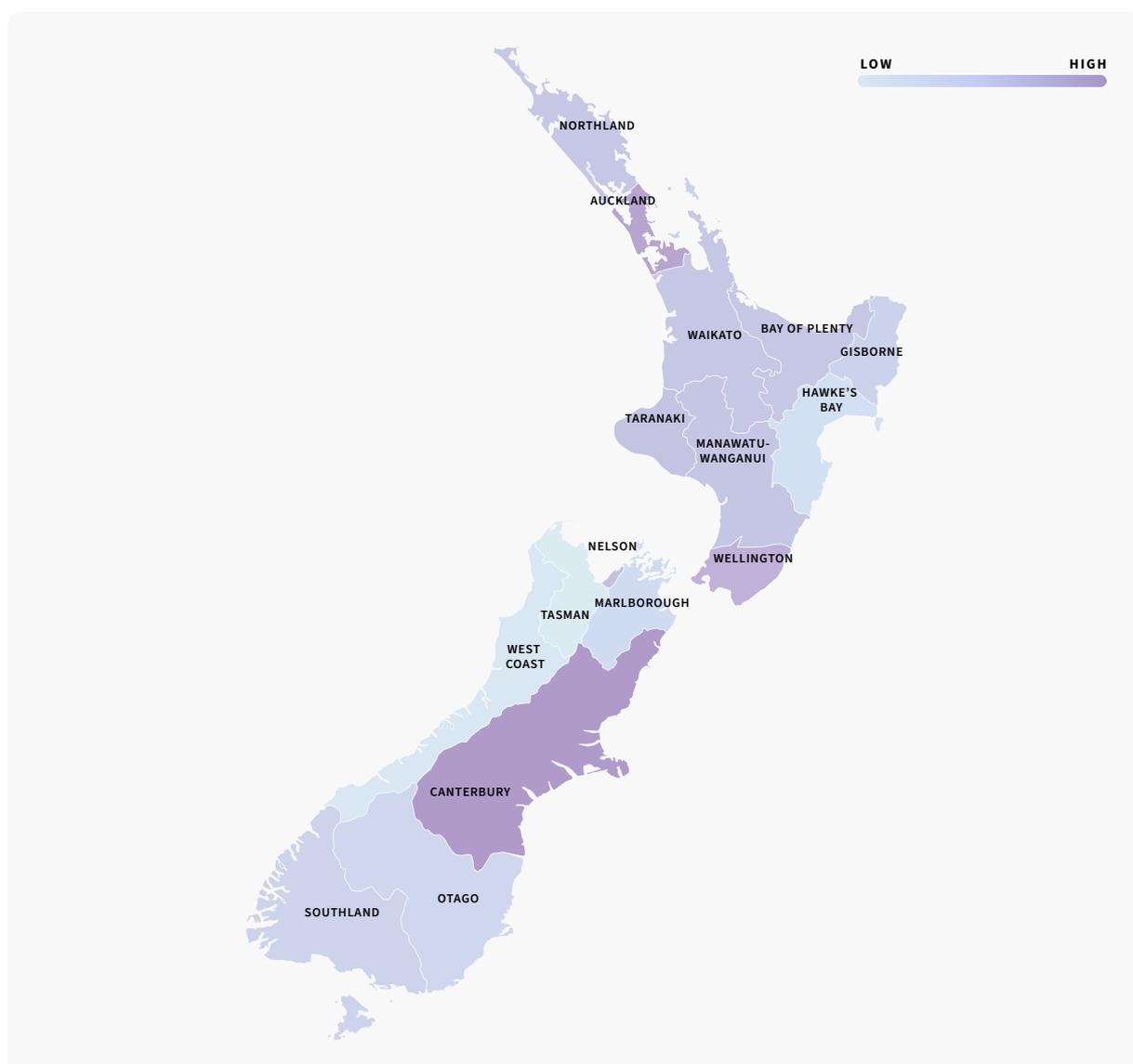


The programme also generated findings on the needs of those engaging with violent and violence-inciting content across New Zealand.

**People consuming violent content are widespread across New Zealand, with people living in the regions demonstrating particularly high engagement rates**

People consuming this content are not confined to major cities but are proportionately concentrated in regional areas (see Figure 3). Responsiveness to offers of support is equally dispersed across the country, demonstrating that the need spans both urban and rural areas.

▼ **Figure 3: National engagement with offers of support for New Zealanders consuming violent or violence-inciting content, weighted by regional population (engagements per 10,000 people)**





### ▷ **Gender patterns in engagement with violent content reveal distinct audiences across content types**

Male users dominated engagement with violent content—and offers of support—across platforms where gender data was available. Women represented a smaller but meaningful segment of those engaging with offers of support, especially while viewing anti-Semitic content online. Engagement with gore and graphic violence content had a more balanced gender distribution, suggesting that New Zealanders of all genders were accessing this content regularly.

### ▷ **The vast majority of those who engaged with offers of support were young people**

It is important to note that the programme is unable to access information about youth under the age of 18. Where age data was available, those engaging with offers of support tended to be within the 18-34 age range.

### ▷ **Older people were more likely to engage with offers of support, despite representing smaller proportions of overall audience volume**

While younger people engaged at a higher volume, older people were more likely to take up offers of support than young people.

### ▷ **People carefully assess safety and anonymity guarantees before committing to support**

People engaging with gore and incel material online demonstrated the most comprehensive patterns of evaluation of the service, focusing intently on confidentiality, cost, and alternatives to direct contact. One visitor to the service website exemplified this behaviour: exploring live chat, email, and text contact pathways and starting an email form during their session.

### ▷ **Immediate support is an essential function to ensure availability during moments of peak motivation to seek help**

During a brief period when live chat was disabled, referrals declined sharply, signalling there was a demand for real-time support. Live chat is not in scope for this programme, but was tested to assess need and impact. Live chat faces significant challenges to sustain, yet it had generated half of all referrals by capturing individuals consuming violent or violence-inciting content when they were most receptive to help.



#### **CASE STUDY**

A young man searched for graphic violent content but instead received an offer of support. He spent nearly 23 minutes engaging with RISE via chat, describing unemployment, mounting debt from gambling, and grief over his grandfather's death. RISE connected him immediately with appropriate support services.

### ▷ **People seeking support after consuming violence online are often experiencing multiple pressures, converging at once**

Where individuals disclosed their personal circumstances, common themes emerged: unemployment, debt, grief, isolation. Individuals seeking help were often struggling with multiple complex challenges, which RISE practitioners were able to offer assistance with.



## 📍 Bystanders



From 31 March to 31 December 2025, more than 2.5 million offers of support reached concerned family members, educators, and friends. Over 8,000 visited the bystander support website. Seventeen reached out directly to RISE.

The programme reaches bystanders in two distinct ways: (a) Active bystanders: Advertisements reach people actively searching for help—those with an immediate concern about someone they know; and (b) Bystander communities: Advertisements are placed within parenting and educator communities to reach people who may not yet have concerns. This preventative reach, building awareness before a moment of crisis, is deliberate in its design and requires a much broader approach than a targeted programme aimed at active bystanders alone.

The community-based outreach approach casts a wider net by intention, reaching people before a crisis moment is experienced or has been recognised. The high volume of offers of support and the low rate of engagement with offers of support are reflective of this design. Both approaches are valuable, and the findings from each tell a different story. The programme has also generated important findings on the nature of bystander concerns across New Zealand, and the conditions under which people will seek help for someone they know or care about.

### 📌 Bystanders are seeking help after they observe worrying behaviour

Half of all bystander engagements with offers of support on Google Search came from people explicitly seeking help with violent behaviour—searches like “help for violent teens” and “my child is aggressive and violent”. Anger and aggression searches accounted for a further 48%, while concerns about conspiracy theories, incel ideology, and radicalisation together made up less than 2%.

### 📌 Cultural moments create powerful windows for reaching bystanders

Content discussing the Netflix series *Adolescence*, which explored themes of online radicalisation and youth violence, generated half of all YouTube bystander engagements with offers of support, with one of the three videos in the series achieving three times the average engagement rate. When a television programme sparks a national conversation about youth violence, concerned families turn to YouTube for answers. Rapidly positioning offers of support at these cultural moments, when bystanders are already seeking understanding, proves highly effective.



#### **▷ Emotional validation of bystanders matters**

The programme uses two complementary approaches to reach bystanders: (1) messaging that acknowledges the emotional toll (e.g., fear and distress) of watching someone you know or care about display troubling behaviour, and (2) messaging that addresses the practical barriers stopping people from seeking help (e.g., uncertainty about where to turn, worry about damaging relationships, or fear of involving law enforcement). Messaging that acknowledges the emotional toll was far more effective in encouraging bystanders to engage with offers of support.

#### **▷ Online parenting and educator communities offer strong prevention potential**

Beyond reaching those with immediate concerns, the programme also reaches people not yet aware they need help. Parenting and teaching communities on Reddit drove 75% of all engagements with offers of support through that platform, demonstrating that concerned parents and educators actively sought support in trusted online spaces.

#### **▷ Women drive the majority of bystander concerns and intervention efforts**

Women accounted for 65% of identifiable Google Search engagements and 80% of Reddit engagements with offers of support where gender was known. This reflects what RISE practitioners observe amongst those reaching out: the overwhelming majority of people who reach out for help concerning a loved one are women.

#### **▷ Older family members show the strongest motivation to seek support**

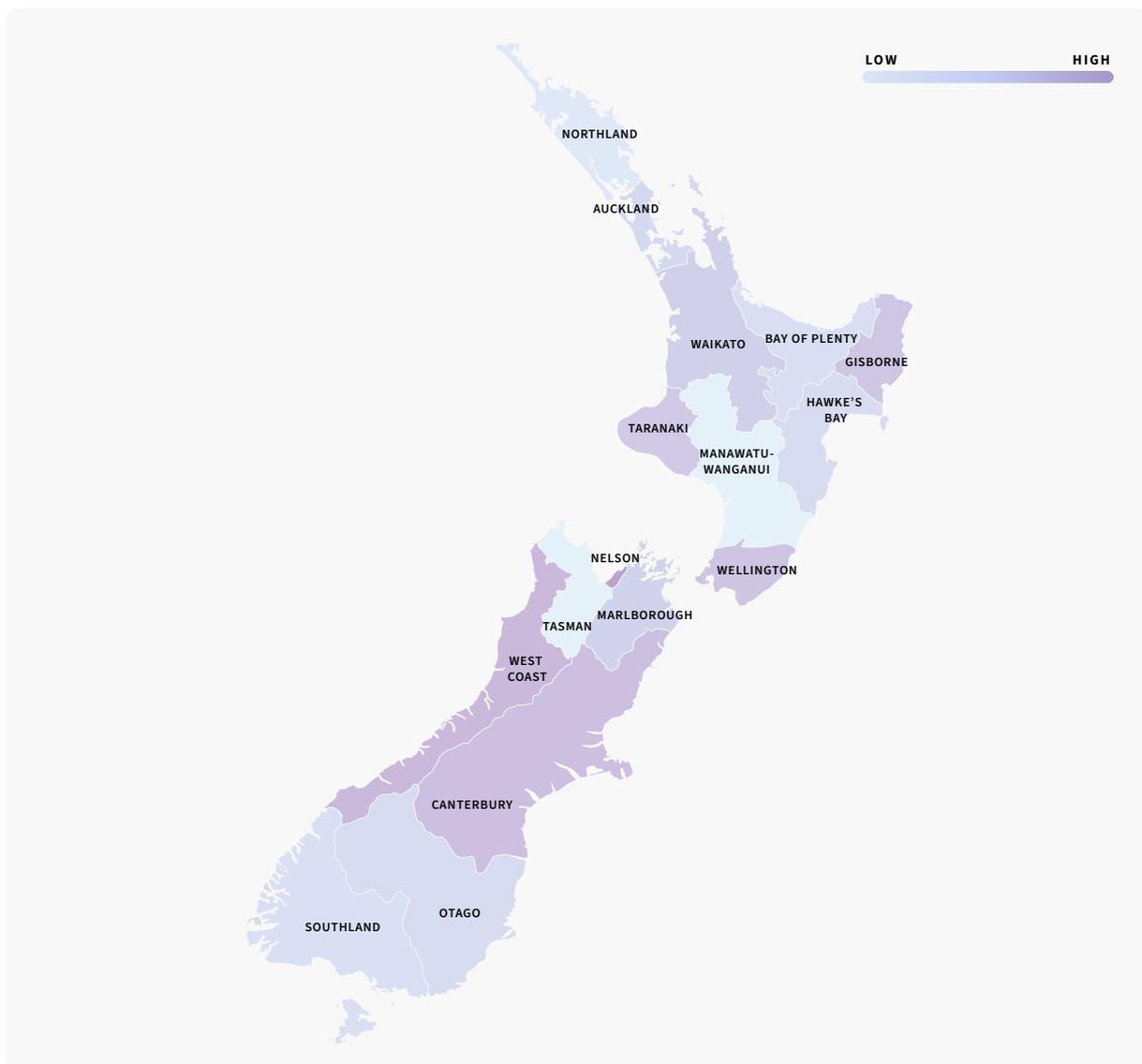
Rates of engagement with offers of support climbed sharply with age. People aged 65 and over engaged with offers of support at nearly three times the rate of younger age groups. Bystanders aged 65 and over showed 15.6% engagement compared to just 5.9% for 18-24-year-olds. This was also reflected in RISE referrals by grandparents and parents of adults. It points to a potential gap: reaching younger peer-to-peer bystanders will require different platforms and different messaging.

#### **▷ People living in the regions show unexpectedly high bystander concern about violent behaviours**

Nelson and West Coast led per capita in bystanders engaging with offers of support, significantly outpacing major centres (see Figure 4). Auckland fell below the national average despite high absolute numbers. This inverse relationship between population size and engagement rates suggests lower-population communities may have heightened awareness of violence risks.



▼ **Figure 4: National engagement with offers of support for active bystanders in New Zealand, weighted by regional population (engagements per 10,000 people)**



**Families face complex crises, not single issues**

Those seeking support from RISE rarely presented needs that involved violence alone. Families described multiple intersecting pressures—neurodevelopmental conditions, grief, financial stress, complex family dynamics—requiring comprehensive support. RISE’s multi-disciplinary team was well placed to address the range of needs that emerged from each situation.



#### CASE STUDY

A parent searched “help for violent teens” and spent over three minutes on the website before reaching out through multiple channels. They were seeking support for a teenage son whose behaviour was putting younger siblings at risk. The parent expressed significant relief at finding a responsive service. RISE assessed the situation and referred the family to external support for ongoing intervention.



#### CASE STUDY

A parent searched “where to get help for a violent child” and spent six minutes reviewing the FAQs before emailing about their aggressive teenage daughter. RISE responded, and follow-up conversations have continued since, providing ongoing parenting support during a difficult time.

## What we learned

Three key insights have emerged from the programme:



### Trust comes first

Before reaching out, people need to know the service is confidential, free, and independent from law enforcement. For people consuming violent content and concerned bystanders, the most visited pages on the websites are the FAQs about privacy and police involvement. Many spent several minutes reading these before making contact. Some returned multiple times before they were ready. This pattern held for both people consuming violence and bystanders: trust had to be established before help could be accepted.



### Service providers must be equipped to address complex crises, not single issues

People seeking support after consuming violence online are often experiencing multiple pressures, converging at once. Common themes emerged: unemployment, debt, grief, isolation. For concerned bystanders, families described multiple intersecting pressures requiring comprehensive support. These are not straightforward situations with single causes. They require support that can address multiple pressures at once, and connect families with a range of services.



### The window for reaching individuals consuming violent or violence-inciting content is brief but real

When live chat was available, individuals were more likely to engage. When it was switched off, referrals dropped. People consuming harmful content may only be receptive for a short time. Reaching them requires services that can respond immediately, at the moment someone is ready to ask for help.



## The future of violence prevention in New Zealand

The New Zealand Online Violence Prevention Programme demonstrates that early intervention for online violence is achievable at a national scale. People who are consuming harmful content, or who are worried about someone who is, will accept help when it is offered at the right moment and in the right way. The evidence points to four areas of meaningful impact.

-  **Reaching people where they are.** Digital early intervention meets people online at the moments they are actively searching for help—before traditional services would ever know they exist. Many of the people who engaged with this programme would be unlikely to walk into a counsellor's office or call a helpline. The programme shows that when support is offered online in a way that is confidential and respectful, people will take it up. That is not a minor finding. It points to a significant gap in New Zealand's current service landscape, and a practical way to fill it.
-  **Mobilising communities to respond.** The bystander response warrants particular attention. Parents, grandparents, and educators actively sought help for people they were worried about—and when given somewhere to turn, they used it. This programme does not just reach individuals in distress; it empowers the people around them to act early. It reached parent and educator communities over two million times to raise awareness that support is available should they experience concerns about a person engaging in violence.
-  **Building lasting capability across New Zealand's prevention sector.** One of the intentional design principles of the New Zealand Online Violence Prevention Programme is to invest in and build the capacity of New Zealand's service sector. In 2025, practitioners from four family violence prevention organisations completed Moonshot training in online harm recognition, risk assessment, and virtual case management delivered by leading international experts. Clinicians, social workers, and behavioural health professionals completed training across three core areas: assessing problematic internet use, recognising and assessing risk for premeditated violence, and understanding radicalisation and extremism pathways. Participant confidence increased substantially across all measures.

These organisations will continue to operate beyond this programme's funding period, forming a referral network with lasting capability to identify and respond to online harm—a capability that did not exist in New Zealand's prevention sector before this programme began. Families seeking help for a violent teenager, individuals struggling with harmful content consumption, and practitioners encountering concerning behaviour in clients all now have an expanded network of support they can turn to that is equipped to help. An increase in referrals to services, however, requires expanded specialist capacity support, and this is a critical component of an ongoing programme. Ultimately, this is what sustainable early intervention looks like in practice: expertise embedded in the community organisations New Zealanders already trust.



▷ **Reducing pressure on crisis and emergency services.** Early intervention is substantially less costly than crisis response. Reaching someone before they, or the people around them, come to the attention of police or emergency services is not only better for the individual; it reduces downstream demand on the systems that deal with the consequences of unchecked harm. This applies across all forms of violence and crime. Gang recruitment, youth violence, and serious organised crime all have significant online dimensions where the same preventative approach can be applied.

The infrastructure now exists: the services are live, the referral pathways are tested, and delivery partners are trained. This work complements but does not replace broader public education on online harms. According to the Classification Office, most New Zealanders remain uncertain about what content is illegal and where to report it.<sup>11</sup> Awareness efforts and early intervention services are most effective when they operate in parallel.

Violence is preventable. The evidence from this programme, alongside comparable initiatives in Australia, Canada, and the United States, demonstrates that well targeted, trustworthy support—offered at the right moment—can reach and change outcomes for individuals most in need. New Zealand now has the foundation to build this capability at scale and make the online environment safer for all New Zealanders.

11. Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu (2026) [Online exposure: Experiences of extreme or illegal content in Aotearoa](#). Wellington, NZ: Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu.



