

Summary Offences (Move-on Orders) Amendment Bill

June 2026

Introduction

We would like to thank the Justice Committee for the opportunity to provide input on this issue.

The National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges (NCIWR) is a non-governmental organisation with 41 member agencies, that has delivered services to women, children, and whānau affected by family violence in Aotearoa for over 50 years. We represent victim-survivors of family violence, specifically wāhine and tamariki, the primary groups subjected to and impacted by family violence.

Summary of Position

The Summary Offences (Move-on Orders) Amendment Bill risks disrupting vital strategies that women who are homeless use to feel a sense of safety when sleeping rough. One of the leading causes of homelessness for women is IPV – meaning that women who are sleeping rough are likely in that position because of a perpetrator's violence.ⁱ The Move-on Orders Bill has the potential to cause further victimisation for this extremely marginalised group of women.

As such:

- NCIWR **opposes** the Summary Offences (Move-on Orders) Amendment Bill.
- NCIWR recommends that the bill be **abandoned**.
- NCIWR recommends that future legislation targeting homelessness or housing be analysed from a gender specific and violence-informed point of view.

Intersection of family violence and homelessness

Family violence often adversely impacts the stability and predictability of housing for adult and child victim-survivors. Family violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and their children.ⁱⁱ

In Aotearoa it is estimated that women make up around 50 percent of those experiencing homelessness.ⁱⁱⁱ The latest Census data, for instance, puts the figure at 57,000 women without a home.^{iv} Women's Refuge risk information, collected from 5000 clients who entered into service in 2024/25 shows:

- 48.7% were stopped from having their own money
- 72.6% had all or most of what they did each day controlled by the perpetrator
- 65.2% had their property (e.g. walls or windows) damaged by the perpetrator

ⁱ Fox, R. & Mecham, K. (2025). From family violence refuges to stable housing. *Parity*, 38(3), 17-19.; Bidois, T., Hynds, A., Hutana-Te Aho, S., & Sanaei, N. (2024). *Ngā Ara ki te Kāinga: Understanding Barriers and Solutions to Women's Homelessness in Aotearoa*. Ihi Research.

ⁱⁱ As above.

ⁱⁱⁱ Amore, K., Viggers, H., & Howden-Chapman, P. (2021). *Severe housing deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand June 2021 update*. Housing & Health Research Programme, Department of Public Health, University of Otago.

^{iv} Radio New Zealand. (2024, December 7). The grim picture of homelessness for NZ women. *Te Ao Māori News*.

These forms of abuse leave an imprint on women's lives even if they are able to separate from the perpetrator. It leaves them dealing with a score of invisible problems that are often treated as unrelated or isolated needs rather than ongoing risk and need that exist because of the perpetrator's violence.

Data from a survey conducted by Women's Refuge in December 2024 highlights some of these invisible issues. Of the 1,707 women who responded to the survey:

- 60.3% had to move house because of the perpetrator's violence
- 40.4% had difficulty getting, keeping, or moving forwards in their job because of the perpetrator's violence
- 30.6% had difficulty finding permanent and affordable housing
- 20.1% had to stay in emergency or transitional housing

What this data tells us is that the impacts of a perpetrator's violence can cause profound instability in the lives of victims (and their children) and often directly impact their ability to attain stable housing.

Despite the evidence showing that women's and children's homelessness is often inextricably connected with violence perpetrated against them, 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.^v The Summary Offences (Move-on Orders) Amendment Bill has the potential to be another such policy that does not take into account the specific needs or safety concerns of women.

Women, homelessness, and safety

Women who are homeless and sleeping rough deliberately and strategically choose places to rest where they are visible enough to deter harm to themselves.^{vi} For example, many women choose public places as this visibility can help to reduce their risk of sexual harassment or sexual violence.^{vii}

The Summary Offences (Move-on Orders) Amendment Bill – specifically the scope that includes rough sleeping as 'disorderly or disruptive behaviour in public places' – risks disrupting one of the few methods that women who are homeless use to feel some sense of safety when attempting to rest. The outcome of this bill passing for women who are sleeping rough will either be that they are forced to find places to rest that are less visible thus putting them at greater risk of experiencing violence, or they will be criminalised for their safety work in choosing a more visible public place to rest.

Women's homelessness is principally caused by intimate partner violence, and as such, government policy and responses to homelessness that overlook women are in effect overlooking IPV victims.^{viii}

^v Bidois et al., 2024.

^{vi} Wehipeihana, N. and Poutama, M. (2025). Understanding Homelessness: Wāhine Māori Experiences of Rough Sleeping in Wellington City and their Safety Needs. Wellington: Wellington City Council.

^{vii} As above.

^{viii} Fox & Mecham, 2025; Bidois et al., 2024.