

EARTHQUAKE SUPPORT COORDINATION SERVICE

Ministry of Social Development, Family and Community Services

The Earthquake Support Coordination Service (ESCS) provides information and practical help for people, families or households whose homes and lives have been affected directly by the Canterbury earthquakes.

The ESCS coordinators:

- provide information
- help residents develop recovery plans
- connect residents with services
- undertake referral and application processes for services needed
- facilitate meetings between residents and relevant experts.

ESCS' skilled virtual team of staff includes non-governmental organisation (NGO) personnel, government Earthquake Support Coordinators and members of the Canterbury Earthquake Temporary Accommodation Service (CETAS). They provide an individualised service, ranging from "light touch" support for people who are managing their own situations through to intensive wrap-around support for those needing a recovery plan or referral to additional support services.

Services can be accessed through an 0800 number (0800 777 846) or by visiting the CETAS website (www.quakeaccommodation.govt.nz).

The innovative nature of the service was developed out of necessity rather than by design. It was piloted as the "earthquake navigation service" following the September 2010 earthquake, supporting 900 displaced families and households. It was based on lessons learned from the 2009 Victoria, Australia bushfires. The service was expanded after the February 2011 earthquake, becoming known as the Earthquake Coordination Service. As part of this expansion, the service:

- leveraged off work done by Family and Community Services' (FACS) Right Services Right Time initiative
- adapted the Waimakariri District Council's customer relationship management database used to support its community work
- utilised the 0800 number platform already established by FACTS with NGO partners Youthline and Lifeline. Other helplines were brought in to operate off this platform, aiding the process of connecting people to community-based social services (e.g. Family Violence Information Line).

Its work has been characterised by innovation, goodwill and willingness to "give it a go". ESCS says it has demonstrated what's possible when government and the community work together. Strong existing relationships between senior government agency managers enabled coordination of services based on a common goal and an underlying spirit of trust and respect.

Continued over page



The service's single shared client management database has enabled information sharing, allowing much more targeted, successful and productive service delivery. It captures shared data about ESCS activity as well as data from CETAS temporary accommodation and financial support services.

Resource (total FTEs) for the service has diminished as referrals have decreased. However, the nature of these referrals are now from residents with more complex and lengthy repair/rebuild situations, many of whom have added vulnerabilities such as poor health.

The ESCS experience may provide useful guidance for ways of working in environments characterised by change, not just situations arising from disasters. The model demonstrates the potential of co-located "hubs" of government and NGO services in order to create efficiencies, avoid duplication of services and improve targeting of funding.

<http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/working-with-us/programmes-services/connected-services/supporting-canterbury/earthquake-support-co-ordination-service.html>

0800 777 846

