



2006 National Survey of Unmet Legal Needs and Access to Services

Summary Results for Canterbury

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Key Highlights for Canterbury

In comparison with national results, the following differences are noted for people in Canterbury:¹

1. Overall, **the region** is noted for more serious employment problems.
2. People in Canterbury are less likely to seek help or advice for their problems, with cost and a perception that any help wouldn't make that much difference some key reasons for this. Sources of help that are less utilised include: internet sites, citizens advice bureaux, government agencies, police, and health professionals.
3. Telephone is the preferred means of accessing help (through this is greatly influenced by people in rural areas).
4. Even though awareness of community law centres is high, there is a greater proportion of people not knowing where the centre is located.
5. **Christchurch** is the area noted for significantly more problems, in particular: consumer related, welfare benefit, employment, and family/relationship breakdown.
6. People in Christchurch are much more likely to have solved their main problem by reaching agreement with the other party, with the influence of family and friends also prevalent.
7. There are two large clusters of people who either just want information to help them solve the problem on their own, or who want someone to help them deal with the problem.
8. In the secondary urban areas of **Timaru and Ashburton**, the incidence of problems appears relatively small. Personal visits for help have a greater preference here.
9. **Rural areas** of Canterbury are also noted for relatively fewer problems.

¹ Note that some base sizes are relatively small and so caution should be exercised when interpreting the results for that area. *denotes small base sizes less than 30 and ** denotes very small base sizes less than 10.

Table: Prevalence of Problems Aggregated for Canterbury and New Zealand

Nature of Problem or Dispute	Christ-church %	Timaru-Asburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	12	2	10	10	10
Money or debt	7	3	6	7	8
Welfare benefits	9	1	5	7	7
Housing or land	4	4	3	4	6
Employment	8	-	6	7	5
Family/whanau or relationship breakdown	7	4	4	6	5
Immigration	-	-	-	-	1
Other	6	6	7	7	6
Nett have a problem	34	20	25	30	29
Nett do not have a problem	66	80	75	70	71
Base	263	38	97	398	7,200

Table: % Rating Problem as Most Serious

Problem type	Main issues	Christchurch %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Consumer related	Faulty or defective goods and services, difficulties getting refunds or replacements, problems with phone or power companies, banks and insurance companies	15	8	11	14	18
Money or debt	Not meeting day to day living needs, and not being able to make credit card or hire purchase payments	9	15	10	10	17
Housing or land	Disputes with neighbours, disputes with councils and local authorities and tenant disputes with landlords	6	19	4	7	11
Welfare benefit	Difficulties trying to obtain entitlements and difficulties finding out what benefits, grants, loans or superannuation entitled to	15	7	14	14	12
Employment	Unfavourable changes to terms and conditions of employment, harassment at work, and discrimination	21	-	14	18	12
Family/relationship	Disputes over division of money or property with a former partner, difficulties with custody and access to children, domestic violence, difficulties obtaining child support	18	20	14	17	15
Immigration	Difficulties obtaining NZ residency or citizenship and sponsoring a partner or other family members	-	-	-	-	2
Other	Traffic/driving offences and being the victim of a crime	16	31	32	20	14
Base		88	7**	32	120	2069

Table: Main Cause for Most Serious Problem to Happen in First Place

	Christ-church %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Receiving incorrect information/being mislead/false advertising	13	8	13	13	9
Other (non income) job related such as bullying, overwork etc	11	-	8	9	9
Faulty goods and appliances	8	-	3	6	8
Relationship break up, e.g. separation or divorce	4	9	6	5	6
Being the victim of a crime, e.g. theft, burglary, assault	7	-	4	6	5
Low income/wages	3	-	5	4	5
Taking on too much debt	2	15	12	5	4
Unable to meet (re)payments	2	-	-	2	4
Illness or poor health	1	-	5	2	4
Being overcharged for a good or service	-	8	4	1	3
Difficulties with a government agency or department ²	4	38	-	5	3
Loss of/breakdown in communication	2	-	3	2	3
Committed a traffic or driving offence	4	-	9	5	3
Problems with neighbours	3	11	-	3	3
Loss or change of job	5	7	-	4	3
Conflicts/disputes with partners, ex-partners, children or other family	1	-	-	1	3
Alcohol or drugs	3	-	-	2	2
Being taken advantage of	4	-	-	4	2
Difficulties with billing and poor/untimely service	1	-	-	1	2
A reduction in benefit/change in benefit status	1	-	-	1	2
Not understanding the implications of credit contracts	3	-	-	2	2
Death of a family member	-	-	-	-	2
Suffered an injury or accident	4	-	-	3	2
Irregular income	1	-	-	-	2
Difficulties with council/planning subdivisions	-	-	-	-	1
Domestic violence	-	-	-	-	1
Base: All people with most serious problem	88	7**	24*	120	2069

² This covers a broad range of agencies and departments, including, but not limited to, IRD, WINZ, ACC and the Immigration Service.

Table: How Problem was Resolved

	Christ-church %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Solved the problem on own without the help of anyone	20	n/a	34	23	28
Agreement was reached with the other party	37	n/a	-	29	24
Solved the problem with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	6	n/a	21	9	10
The problem sorted itself out	17	n/a	-	13	10
After court or tribunal action	8	n/a	39	15	9
Solved the problem with the help of family and friends	4	n/a	-	4	7
Gave up trying to resolve the problem	6	n/a	-	5	6
Through mediation	-	n/a	-	-	4
Did nothing to resolve the problem	2	n/a	-	1	2
Base: Most serious problem over	44	1**	12*	58	1016

Table: Current Problem Position

	Christ-church %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Trying to solve it on own without help of anyone else	21	66	21	25	28
Trying to solve it with help of family and friends	30	-	11	23	16
Trying to solve it with the help of someone (other than mediator or family and friends)	4	-	21	7	15
Trying to reach agreement with the other party without court or tribunal action	11	11	33	15	10
Not trying to do anything because don't know what to do	8	-	-	6	9
Not trying to do anything because think it will resolve itself	5	-	9	5	7
Court or tribunal action is occurring	19	-	-	13	5
Court or tribunal action is about to occur	-	-	-	-	5
In the process of going though mediation	2	24	-	5	4
Base: Most serious problem still ongoing	44	6**	12*	62	1052

Table: % Seeking Help

	Christ-church %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Yes	35	32	42	36	44
Maybe	3	-	-	3	4
No	62	68	58	61	52
Base: Have problem	88	7**	24	120	2069

Table: % Seeking Type of Help

Type of help wanted	Christ-church %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Information only, so they can sort problem out themselves	47	n/a	-	35	34
Information <u>and</u> basic support (e.g. help with filling in forms, help with contacting third parties to seek information)	21	n/a	62	29	35
Someone to help them deal with the problem (e.g. talking to the other side)	44	n/a	18	36	35
Someone to sort out problem for them	4	n/a	6	6	11
Someone to appear on their behalf and/or represent them before a court or tribunal	17	n/a	48	26	18
Base: Seeking help	34	2**	10**	46	981

Table: Services Accessed for Advice and Help

Service Provider	Christ-church %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Leaflet, booklet or other publication	5	n/a	14	6	10
Internet site	4	n/a	-	4	13
Local council of other public authority	14	n/a	13	15	12
Community law centre	13	n/a	-	11	11
Citizens Advice Bureau	7	n/a	14	8	16
Other local social services and advocacy organisation	27	n/a	-	20	13
Private lawyer	16	n/a	48	27	22
Lawyer doing pro bono work	7	n/a	8	7	5
Legal aid lawyer	15	n/a	9	13	10
Insurance company	14	n/a	-	11	3
Government agency or department	8	n/a	16	9	20 ³
Police	3	n/a	-	2	9
Doctor or other health professional	16	n/a	9	14	23
Mediation or reconciliation service	10	n/a	27	13	7
Member of parliament	4	n/a	-	3	6
Ombudsman	-	n/a	-	1	2
Friends of other family members	18	n/a	65	28	34
Trade Union	8	n/a	-	6	3
Court desk	6	n/a	-	5	3
Minister of religion	4	n/a	-	3	3
Māori organisation	-	n/a	-	-	4
Average number of sources used	2.0	n/a	2.2	2.1	2.5
Base: Seek help	34	2**	10**	46	981

Table: Preferred Methods of Access (All people)

	Christchurch %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Personal visit	42	56	26	39	42
Telephone	38	34	65		36
Through a web site	8	6	1	6	7
By letter	2	-	-	1	3
By email	2	-	2	2	4
Some other way	3	1	2	2	2
Don't know/it depends	5	2	4	5	5
Base	263	38	97	398	7,200

³ Note: Some people are likely to have provided this response when they have received legal aid.

Table: Main Reasons Given for Not Seeking Help for Most Serious Problem

	Christ- church %	Timaru- Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Dealt with it myself	28	n/a	20	27	33
The problem was sorted before got around to seeking help	4	n/a	4	4	13
Thought the problem would resolve itself	4	n/a	10	9	11
Did not think it was serious or important enough	6	n/a	3	6	9
Did not think it would make much difference	19	n/a	7	18	8
Couldn't be bothered	-	n/a	-	-	5
Didn't know what to do or where to go	3	n/a	-	3	4
Wanted to keep it in the family/whanau	2	n/a	-	2	4
Thought it would cost too much	18	n/a	-	14	4
Thought it would be too stressful to sort out	4	n/a	5	4	3
Tried to seek help or advice but they were unable to help	7	n/a	10	7	4
Was uncertain of my rights	3	n/a	5	4	3
Thought it would take too much time	-	n/a	-	-	2
Didn't trust anyone	-	n/a	-	-	2
Fear of government or official agencies/intimidated by them	6	n/a	-	4	2
The help or advice wanted was not available locally	2	n/a	10	2	2
Too embarrassed/shy	2	n/a	-	1	2
Confused by the legal process/intimidated by it	-	n/a	-	-	1
Thought that the other party was right	-	n/a	1	1	1
Too scared	-	n/a	-	-	1
Thought it would damage the relationship with the other party	-	n/a	-	-	1
Other	12	n/a	33	15	20
Base: All people not seeking help	55	5**	14*	74	1087

Table: Impacts on People with Problems

Impacts of problem	Christchurch %	Timaru- Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Stress related illness	41	27	22	36	39
Loss of confidence	25	65	39	30	32
Loss of income	26	38	48	31	26
Physical ill health	13	35	15	15	20
Relationship breakdown	14	-	16	14	16
Loss of employment	15	7	10	13	14
Had to move home	11	-	3	9	10
Violence	8	-	3	6	6
Base	88	7**	24*	120	2069

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Legal Aid

	Christ-church %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of legal aid and know where or how to apply for it	36	31	27	34	34
Aware of legal aid but don't know where or how to apply for it	47	58	66	52	51
Total awareness	83	89	93	86	85
Not aware of legal aid	17	11	7	14	15
Base: All people	263	38	97	398	7,200

Table: Awareness and Knowledge of Community Law Centres

	Christ-church %	Timaru-Ashburton %	Rural %	Total region %	NZ %
Aware of community law centres and know where they are located	33	5	22	27	23
Aware of community law centres but don't know where they are	37	18	38	36	25
Total awareness	70	23	60	63	48
Not aware of community law centres	30	77	40	37	52
Base: All people	263	38	97	398	7,200