Media release
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FlexiGroup NZ faces up to family violence in the workplace

- FlexiGroup NZ introduces Family Violence Support Policy
- 10 days paid leave available to victims of domestic violence
- 50% of managers trained in family violence workshops

FlexiGroup New Zealand (NZ) has implemented a company-wide *Family Violence Support Policy* committing to taking action in advance of the upcoming Victims Protections Bill legislation which comes into effect in April 2019.

The policy provides a range of support mechanisms for employees who are victims of domestic violence including allocating 10 days paid leave to be used for medical appointments, legal proceedings and other activities related to domestic violence.

Other support mechanisms can include changes to employee patterns of working hours, location of work, work telephone number and email address. Additionally, if a team member is supporting a colleague who is a is a victim of domestic violence they can take up to five days' unpaid leave to accompany the victim of family violence to court, hospital or to help with the care of children.

FlexiGroup NZ worked closely with Women's Refuge in the development of the *Family Violence Support Policy* and has already trained 50% of managers in '*Supporting victims and users of family violence*' workshops, helping to raise awareness around the different types of family violence, identification of possible signs and behaviours of victims and users of violence and supporting victims or users of violence.

Dr Ang Jury, Chief Executive of Women's Refuge says: "We applaud FlexiGroup NZ for developing and instituting a *Family Violence Support Policy*. For victims of domestic violence, having a workplace that is not only compassionate, but aware of the signs that an individual is in an abusive situation can make all the difference. We hope to work with many more organisations as this approach makes it easier for individuals to come forward, feel supported and receive the assistance they require."

FlexiGroup NZ Chief Executive Officer, Chris Lamers says promoting open dialogue in the workplace on domestic violence is an important step in addressing New Zealand's troubling rate of domestic violence.

"Family violence isn't an easy topic to talk about but it is in silence that it continues to happen with almost 80% of cases going unreported. If we're going to truly face up to the problem, as a nation everyone including businesses and employers need to step up and do their bit to break the silence and promote change.

"It's about fostering a workplace environment where everyone is clear that domestic violence of any form is never OK but it's absolutely OK to talk about it, to reach out for help – and have the reassurance that non-judgemental support is available."

Family violence statistics in New Zealand:

- New Zealand has one of the highest rates of family violence in the developed world, as one in three women experience domestic violence and one in six men will experience sexual violence.
- It is estimated that there could be around 500,000 family violence victims in New Zealand, of which more than 40% are in paid employment.
- 76% of family violence incidents are NOT reported to Police.
- Family violence is estimated to cost the country between $4.1 and $7 billion each year.

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