

Media Release
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Essential child and family services miss out on financial relief

Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA) has welcomed the Budget's focus on helping our most vulnerable families through improved access to primary health services, the additional learning support programme, and the focus on social housing. The much-needed funding boost for family violence services is also to be welcomed.

But the Budget bypasses the essential and intensive community-based child and family services which are in urgent need of more funding.

SSPA national manager Brenda Pilott says most not-for-profit organisations working with vulnerable children and families have had their funding frozen for a decade while demand for services has steadily increased.

"The situation is at a critical level and raises concerns about the future of many services that are desperately needed by vulnerable children and families. We know a number are at imminent risk of closure and we're concerned at the impact on children and families of under-funded, over-stretched services."

Brenda Pilott says she is heartened that the Minister for Children, Tracey Martin, recognises that the approach of the past decade can't continue and work is now underway on a more sustainable funding model.

"We are encouraged by this year's funding increase for family violence services and by the Minister of Finance's promise of a strong focus on social wellbeing in Budget 2019," she says.

"But we are very concerned that, in the meantime, some services are stretched to breaking point and won't be able to last another year without financial relief."

Brenda Pilott says she has talked to Ministers about the need for an interim emergency fund to prevent vital services from going under. SSPA is awaiting a response.

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Brenda Pilott, SSPA national manager, is currently in the UK but can be contacted on 027 430 6016 (please note 11-hour time difference). You can email her at brenda.pilott@outlook.co.nz