

Synthesis of the impact of Budget 2019 funding on specialist sexual violence services

Short Report



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

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Disclaimer

The views and interpretations in this report are those of the evaluation reports authors and not the official position of the Ministry of Social Development.

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Introduction

Purpose of the report

This report provides an overview of insights on the Budget 2019 (Budget-19) investment in Ministry of Social Development (MSD) funded sexual violence services and the sexual violence sector. Synthesising findings from multiple evaluation activities, this report considers the following questions.

Over-arching evaluation question

How has the Budget-19 funding impacted MSD-funded specialist sexual violence services and the sexual violence sector?

Secondary evaluation questions

Service users

How has the Budget-19 funding impacted accessibility of sexual violence services for service users?

How has the Budget-19 funding impacted the responsiveness of sexual violence services to service user needs?

How has the Budget-19 funding impacted the support that sexual violence service users receive?

Service providers

Workforce

How has the Budget-19 funding impacted workforce capacity across sexual violence services?

How has the Budget-19 funding impacted workforce capability across sexual violence services?

Organisational development

How has the Budget-19 funding impacted organisational development across sexual violence services?

Sector wide

How has the Budget-19 funding impacted sexual violence sector integration?

Budget 2019 investment

In 2019, as part of the Wellbeing Budget, the Government announced a family and sexual violence package that would deliver the most significant investment in family and sexual violence support services to date.¹ Of the \$131 million allocated over four years to expand specialist sexual violence services, MSD received \$90.3 million to provide sustainable ongoing funding to existing sexual violence services as well as to develop new services and initiatives.² It was hoped that this investment would build the capability of specialist sexual violence services and create a more integrated, efficient, and responsive system for all those affected by sexual violence.³

MSD used its Budget-19 allocation to invest in a range of specialist sexual violence services and initiatives. Appendix A provides an overview of sexual violence services and a breakdown of MSD's Budget-19 allocation, by service and funding type.

The impact of Budget 2019 funding on MSD-funded specialist sexual violence services

In 2019, an evaluation work programme was developed to understand the impact of Budget-19 funding on MSD-funded specialist sexual violence services and increase understanding of how to support people affected by sexual violence.

Evaluation activities related to Budget-19 investment included:

- the development of service-specific intervention logic models
- a qualitative [baseline survey](#),⁴ undertaken in 2020/2021, with representatives from sexual violence service providers and their Relationship Managers, Safe to Talk helpline staff, and national bodies to understand plans and expectations for the funding
- four service-specific evaluations, conducted across 2023 and 2024, to explore the impact of the Budget-19 funding on service users and frontline staff of the Sexual Harm Crisis Support Service (Crisis Service)⁵, Court Support Service⁶, Peer Support for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Service (MSSA Service)⁷ and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Service for Non-mandated Adults (NM-HSB Service)⁸

1 Ardern, J., & Logie, J. (2019, May 19). *Breaking the cycle of family and sexual violence*. Retrieved from <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/breaking-cycle-family-and-sexual-violence>

2 This total also includes funding for Kaupapa Māori Sexual Violence Services. The evaluation workstream focused on tauwiwi services only.

3 <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/factsheets/budget/factsheet-sexual-violence-services-2019.pdf>

4 Gregory, N., Momsen, K., Platts-Fowler, D. & Watterson, R. (2021). *Impact of Budget-19 on Sexual Violence Services and the Sector – Baseline Survey*

5 Beres, M., Benton-Greig, P., Pearman-Beres, P., Clark, C., Bond, P. & Foote, J. (2024). *Impact of Budget 2019 Funding on Sexual Harm Crisis Support Service Users and Workforce*

6 Beres, M.A., Benton-Greig, P., Pearman-Beres, L., Clark, A., Bond, P. & Foote, J. (2024). *Impact of Budget 2019 Funding on Court Support Service Users and Workforce*.

7 Cording, J., Fehoko, E., Kaiwai, H., Gilbert, J., Maclean, J., Spammers, M., Lee, D. & Farrell, K. (2024). *Evaluation of the impact of Budget 2019 funding on peer support for male survivors of sexual abuse service*.

8 Cording, J., Fehoko, E., Morrison, K., Gilbert, J., Sivanantham, S. & Farrell, K. (2024). *Evaluation of the impact of Budget 2019 funding on the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Service for Non-mandated Adults*.

- follow up interviews and focus groups, conducted in 2023, with managers from Crisis Service and Court Support Service providers and Safe to Talk frontline and managerial staff
- a synthesis report to bring together the findings from the above activities to identify the overall impacts of the funding on specialist sexual violence services and the sexual violence sector.

The evaluations focus on the impact of the funding from the perspective of service providers and key stakeholders, and the flow-on effects experienced by service users and their whānau/supporters. In this context, impact is defined differently from evaluation focused on change for service users. When focused on service users, impact usually refers to establishing a cause-and-effect relationship, often using a control. However, this was not feasible, nor an aim of these evaluations. The evaluations presented here are qualitative and understand 'impact' as the changes the Budget-19 funding contributed to.

This report presents a synthesis of findings from the baseline survey, the four service-specific evaluations and findings from the follow-up interviews with service providers. Appendix B provides an overview of the synthesis approach and limitations.

A theory of change developed for the evaluation work programme can be found in Appendix C.

Contextual factors that influenced the impact of the Budget-19 funding

The following key contextual factors preceded, accompanied, and influenced the impact of the Budget-19 funding and perceptions of the impact:

- **Contracting changes:** MSD moved to longer-term contracts for most sexual violence services with Budget-19 funding, offering providers more security, and influencing their funding use. Contracts for most services also shifted from a volume-based to an FTE contract model.
- **Demand for sexual violence support:** Providers reported a significant rise in demand for sexual violence services, likely due to high-profile events and general increased awareness of sexual violence, which encouraged more people to seek help.
- **COVID-19:** COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions disrupted service operations and worsened recruitment challenges for providers, while demand for services increased.
- **Capacity constraints and gaps in the system:** Due to the wide-ranging impacts of sexual violence, service users often require additional services. However, providers reported substantial capacity constraints, particularly in long-term sexual violence support, sexual violence support for young people and mental health support. These constraints affected outcomes of service users and contributed to larger caseloads, possibly limiting the impact of Budget-19 funding.
- **Additional hurdles and costs for rural providers:** Providers in rural areas often cover large geographical service areas and make unique provisions to improve access. They experienced greater recruitment difficulties and incurred additional costs for staff relocation and development.
- **Stage of service development:** How sexual violence service providers prioritised the Budget-19 funding was influenced by the stage of service development of the service. The difference made by the funding and the magnitude of the impact therefore varied.
- **Cost of living:** Rising costs for service providers were reported to have reduced the potential benefits of the Budget-19 funding.



Findings

Impacts on the sexual violence workforce

Budget-19 funding has boosted workforce expansion in specialist sexual violence services, resulting in greater service capacity

All service evaluations indicated that Budget-19 funding played a key role in expanding the workforce. Crisis Service providers reported that before the Budget-19 funding, they had insufficient staff numbers to meet demand or service specifications, which funding has helped alleviate.

Sexual violence service providers highlighted the importance of Budget-19 in capacity-building, with the funding being utilised to hire additional staff to address the growing demand for sexual violence services. As one MSSA Service provider explained:

“[Funding has meant] more FTE, so we are more readily available to see the guys and we have the space to see people. Because we’ve never really had the FTE and space before...”
(MSSA Service Evaluation).

For the MSSA Service, funding increased the number of providers contracted to deliver the service. This increased capacity allowed for more timely responses to service requests, enabling providers to serve a larger number of service users and reach previously underserved communities.

The funding supported a workforce recruitment drive that contributed to diversification and specialisation of the workforce. This, providers maintain, enabled them to better respond to Māori, Pacific peoples, and LGBTQIA+ service users and other groups for whom there are service gaps. A recent report on family violence and sexual violence service gaps identified limited workforce capability to appropriately respond to the needs of these groups.⁹

For the Crisis Service, some providers spoke about how the funding had enabled the establishment of specialist positions such as Māori Development Manager and Rainbow Community Lead. Similarly, the funding has enabled NM-HSB Service providers to establish new bicultural advisor roles, and some providers also had Pacific advisors. The growth in frontline staff was complemented by a corresponding increase in administrative and support staff (eg human resources roles, financial management roles) for some providers.

Budget-19 funding additionally catalysed the establishment of new services, such as the Court Support Service, which is now offered by 17 providers across Aotearoa New Zealand. Before receiving Court Support Service contracts, some Crisis Service providers offered support to victim-survivors in the court process. The dedicated funding for a Court Support Service allowed these providers to hire Court Support Service staff, rather than having their Crisis Service staff manage court support work alongside their existing caseloads.

9 Ministry of Social Development (2024). *A report outlining family violence and sexual violence service gaps in Aotearoa*. Retrieved from [Report-on-gaps-in-FVSV-services-April-2024.pdf](#)

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT



For the Peer Support for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Service (MSSA Service), perhaps the most significant impact of the Budget-19 funding increase was the establishment of five new regional MSSA providers, alongside the expansion of the existing six MSSA providers. This growth required the recruitment of additional staff for these new and expanded sites.

A large increase in demand for peer support services was also a driver for a focus on growing the capacity of the workforce. Figures from Tautoko Tāne Male Survivors Aotearoa (national body for MSSA organisations), revealed a significant increase in the number of active service users engaging in regular peer support services – from 710 in 2018 to over 2000 active service users at the end of September 2023.¹⁰

Budget-19 funding has been used to invest in staff training and development which has increased workforce capability

The funding made available through Budget-19 enabled providers to increase budgets for training and professional development, while the additional workforce capacity allowed staff more time to either conduct internal training sessions or attend external ones. This investment in training and development meant that staff had improved understanding of the different communities they work with and increased skills to meet the diverse needs of service users. As one Crisis Service worker noted, “[it’s] just so important for the work that we do continue[s] to be at the forefront of evidence-based research for trauma work” (Crisis Service Evaluation).

Recruitment of new staff into specialised roles (eg clinical leadership and bicultural advisor positions) has resulted in increased access to cultural and professional supervision. The establishment of these roles has also further promoted good practice and enabled providers to develop strategies and processes to support consistency of service delivery. For example, Tautoko Tāne Aotearoa used part of their Budget-19 funding allocation to develop national resources, materials, and trainings to help support the consistency of peer support provision across their member organisations. These include policies and frameworks to guide practice with different population groups, including bicultural practice.

Additionally, the increased capacity and opportunities for development have allowed for greater focus on staff wellbeing and job satisfaction. Some providers have also noted that these improvements have helped ease the emotional and psychological impacts of working with sexual violence trauma.

¹⁰ Tautoko Tāne Male Survivors Aotearoa (2023). TMO operational report: Q1 2024. Please note the 2023 figure does not include data from the Canterbury region.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT



Findings from the Sexual Harm Crisis Support Service (Crisis Service) evaluation highlighted that the increased staff numbers, greater job security, improved infrastructure, creation of more permanent positions, and improved access to employment entitlements and professional development had led to improvements in staff wellbeing.

The increase in staff capacity had helped reduce staff caseloads and allowed providers to offer more flexible work arrangements and employment entitlements, including professional supervision and professional development.

The funding had allowed Crisis Service providers to focus on initiatives to help manage staff wellbeing, which some staff thought had led to less burn-out, improved wellbeing and increased job satisfaction.

Impacts on organisational development

Budget-19 funding has impacted organisational development through enabling enhanced infrastructure, staffing, and service promotion

As sexual violence services increased in size, they needed to invest further in the organisational infrastructure of their agencies to accommodate and support the additional staff and service locations. As one Crisis Service provider explains:

“...if you move from a small organisation to a medium-sized organisation, you need to have really robust performance frameworks, you need to look at your whole structure of you know... there’s the increased administration... You increase your payroll... on one level we can say look we’re going to employ three new counsellors and three new social workers, but what comes with that is we’re also going to employ a new coordinator, or a manager, or a practice leader or an accountant or an HR specialist. So, it has a bigger impact than just recruiting staff” (Baseline Survey).

To accommodate increased staff numbers and service user demand, Budget-19 funding has enabled some providers to improve existing facilities or secure more service locations and better suited spaces. This has included establishing drop-in centres and satellite services, making premises more accessible for disabled service users, soundproofing rooms, and creating reception areas.

Funding has been used by some providers to upgrade outdated or inadequate technology (eg mobile phones, laptops), which has aided remote working arrangements and increased service modality and coverage. Investment in IT systems (eg HR systems, client management systems) has also improved some providers’ efficiency, as well as increasing their monitoring and quality assurance capabilities. Tautoko Tāne Male Survivors Aotearoa, the national body funded through Budget-19, have used the administrative data produced through the common systems of its member organisations to produce high quality, well-evidence reports to support their advocacy work for MSSA Service providers, and male survivors more widely.

With the addition of frontline and support staff, those in managerial roles have had more capacity to focus on long-term planning and the strategic goals of their organisations.

Alongside the longer contracts that accompanied Budget-19, the funding enabled some providers to shift from relying on volunteer staff to hiring paid, permanent employees – thereby enhancing the professionalism and quality of their services. Efforts to improve the professional image of services also included utilising funding to gain MSD Social Sector Accreditation, and purchasing logos, uniforms, and business cards.

Budget-19 funding also allowed some providers to promote their services and focus on community engagement and outreach, which increased service visibility. This has also improved referral pathways between providers and fostered better collaboration with other stakeholders in the social sector.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT



Driven by the joint strategic aims of their organisations, the Budget-19 funding contributed towards the development of an integrated and common client management system and human resources system to enable the secure sharing of data between the three Non-mandated Harmful Sexual Behaviour (NM-HSB) Service providers.

The system upgrades yielded several positive outcomes. One NM-HSB provider mentioned the new HR system allowed them to match staff to service users meaning they could better meet service users needs. It also helped providers better monitor and plan staff development by keeping track of staff training. The updated systems improved their administrative data and helped providers identify how processes around service user assessments and exits could be managed more effectively to help providers see service users faster and reduce waitlists.

Impacts on accessibility and responsiveness

New services and service locations, alongside the increase in workforce capacity, have improved accessibility for service users

Budget-19 funding has considerably improved the accessibility of sexual violence services across Aotearoa New Zealand by enabling the establishment of new service types, new provider sites and satellite locations. The increased number of NM-HSB treatment sites, as enabled through this funding, has improved accessibility to NM-HSB services. As one NM-HSB Service provider states: *“The [funding for service users] opened up and became more accessible, probably in the last four or five years. It became easier for people to access our services”* (NM-HSB Service Evaluation).

Budget-19 funding directly addressed two service gaps in sexual violence support by enabling the launch of two new specialist services: the Concerning Sexual Ideation (CSI) Service and the Court Support Service. The establishment of the CSI Service means that adults who are experiencing concerning sexual ideation can access early intervention and support to reduce the chances of them engaging in harmful behaviours. The establishment of the Court Support Service provides victim-survivors with access to psycho-social support before, during and after court proceedings.

The increased use of online technology to facilitate virtual support was another avenue through which providers have improved access. The emergence of remote online service delivery, primarily as a response to delivering support during the COVID-19 lockdowns and funded through both grant payments and Budget-19 funding, has continued across some services. This helped fill some gaps in geographic coverage and increased accessibility for those who cannot easily access a physical site.

Additionally, the Budget-19 funding allowed many providers to offer practical financial assistance to service users, removing barriers to engagement by providing resources such as petrol vouchers, phone top-ups, and eliminating co-payment fees for the NM-HSB Service. Some providers also noted that funding contributed to the purchase of work vehicles, thereby enabling home visits for service users.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT



The implementation of new services, alongside the expansion of existing services into new areas, greatly improved accessibility to sexual violence services across Aotearoa New Zealand. The following provides a summary of this growth:

- Concerning Sexual Ideation Service – establishment of this new service across the three existing NM-HSB Service providers.
- Court Support Service – establishment of this new service across 17 providers over four years.
- Sexual Harm Crisis Support Service - some providers expanded their services into previously unserved communities and regions.
- Peer Support for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse – establishment of five new regional MSSA Service providers and the expansion of provider locations by the remaining six MSSA Service providers.
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Service for Non-mandated Adults - the establishment of at least five new satellite sites beyond the main hubs in Christchurch, Wellington/Lower Hutt, and Auckland.

Budget-19 funding has improved service responsiveness through increased and more diverse staffing

The increase in staff numbers has led to greater provider responsiveness and timeliness, even as services face growing demand. Service users are facing shorter waiting times, with one MSSA Service user noting: *“I sent a web form or email to [provider]. That same night, [peer support worker] called me... I was surprised because I really didn’t have any hopes that it was going to be (1) open and (2) have spots for me”* (MSSA Service Evaluation).

Alongside increased capacity, the increase in the number of funded non-mandated treatment spaces contributed to an improvement in timeliness across NM-HSB Service providers. One provider had been able to increase their concurrent treatment groups from two to 14, which had a positive impact on the length of time people had to wait to begin treatment.

Both the NM-HSB Service and Crisis Service evaluations reported that the increase in staffing levels had contributed to a reduction in waitlist numbers for these services. Crisis Service and NM-HSB Service providers also noted how the increased capacity facilitated through the funding had allowed them to check-in with and proactively support those waiting for services. NM-HSB Service providers now offer psycho-social support and are piloting psycho-educational groups for waitlisted service users.

Additionally, the Budget-19 funding has improved the cultural responsiveness of services. The funding has supported the recruitment of culturally diverse staff, the availability of cultural supervision and training, and the development of bicultural strategies by some services – all of which helped increase cultural competency. Across the evaluations there were several examples of how providers had improved their cultural responsiveness. The increase in capacity and hiring of Pacific staff had allowed one Crisis Service provider to open a ‘by Pacific, for Pacific’ service in their area to meet the support needs of Pacific service users. The new CSI Service and psycho-social support contracts gave NM-HSB Service providers the freedom to engage with service users and whānau in way they were not able to in the past. One NM-HSB Service provider spoke about how they now have a Pacific group and plans to introduce a Tāne group.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT



For the Peer Support for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Service (MSSA Service), the bicultural capability of providers has been supported by Tautoko Tāne Male Survivors Aotearoa through the development of the Kia Mārire (Effectiveness with Māori) national strategy. The strategy provides guidance for working with Māori within a Te Tiriti of Waitangi framework.

The MSSA Service evaluation highlighted the growth in kaupapa Māori support offerings for survivors, offering the opportunity to learn more about tikanga Māori or te ao Māori and reconnect with their culture. Several MSSA Service providers also deliver services under a kaupapa Māori framework. Māori service users spoken to as part of the MSSA Service evaluation reported that their cultural needs were generally met.

Impacts on service user support

Budget-19 funding has expanded the range of services available, while also improving access to more holistic, long-term, and whānau-centred care

Budget-19 funding has played a key role in expanding support and treatment options, making it possible for providers to better meet the individual needs of service users. This has enabled some providers to offer psycho-social support to help victim-survivors stabilise from crisis, with others offering more holistic supports (eg self-defence classes, trauma-informed yoga, equine-assisted therapy). Budget-19 funding has also enabled some providers to employ social workers to offer wraparound support (eg housing, healthcare, advocacy supports), allowing other staff to focus on their existing workloads.

The uplift in funding, alongside the increase in contract lengths, has meant service users can access more enduring support. As an example, to bridge a known service gap, many Crisis Service providers now provide longer-term support to victim-survivors while they wait to engage other services. Similarly, Budget-19 funding has enabled NM-HSB Service providers to offer longer-term 'maintenance groups' for service users who have finished their formal NM-HSB treatment programme.

Budget-19 funding has also expanded the availability of services to whānau and supporters of service users where appropriate. The greater flexibility afforded by the FTE contracts and additional funding has meant that more providers can include whānau in sessions, offer separate sessions, run support groups, and travel to whānau homes.

Many of the positive improvements to services supported by the Budget-19 funding, means service providers are better positioned to deliver quality services that meet the needs of service users when they need them. As expressed by one Crisis Service provider manager:

"The extra funding that we received, it did enable us to be able to add a personalised, individual level, it enhanced the support we can give the individual client. And also extrapolate that to the wider system and those extra layers around the system. The client, their whānau, those wraparounds services, those iwi services we have around them. It enabled us to change our approaches there because we had the resources to do that"
(Crisis Service Follow-up Focus Group).

Service users who participated in the evaluations spoke about the many positive changes in their lives because of their engagement with sexual violence services. They spoke about how the support they received had increased their wellbeing, improved their mental health, and provided them with vital skills to support continued wellbeing.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT



The court process for victim-survivors of sexual violence is notoriously gruelling. Service users reported that the Court Support Service had a marked impact on the experience of the court process, and they reported feeling more prepared for court. One said: *“Because when I was in the stand, I was like, holy, that [conversation with Court Support Service Worker] actually prepared me”* (Court Support Service Evaluation). They felt informed on what to expect from the court proceedings and said they were helped to understand the legal terminology used.

Court Support Service staff, Court Victim Advisors¹¹ and service users agreed that the service helps victim-survivors develop skills to cope with the court process and manage their anxiety, potential triggers, and flashbacks.

Service users expressed deep appreciation for the support they received through what they describe as a traumatising, unsettling and overwhelming experience. Some victim-survivors explicitly said they would not have managed to remain engaged with the court process had it not been for the support they received through the Court Support Service.

Impacts on sector integration

Enhanced collaboration and referral pathways have improved sector integration

Increased staffing has enabled providers to dedicate more resource to building and maintaining both intra- and inter-agency relationships and connections with other community groups and the social sector at large. This has included greater capacity to participate in networks, working groups and steering groups, collaborate through trainings, share best practice, and contribute to national pieces of work (eg with the Interdepartmental Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence [IEB]).

Stronger sector relationships and a clearer understanding of the available support services have also led to more incoming referrals and more precisely tailored outgoing referrals. With increased capacity, staff were also able to dedicate time to ensure smooth transitions for service users.

Strengthened relationships between providers and iwi, marae, and local churches, has widened the landscape of support available to service users. It has also improved accessibility to culturally appropriate support, especially for Māori and Pacific service users.

11 Court Victim Advisors are employed by the Ministry of Justice. They are specialist officers of the court available from the defendant's first day in court to help them through the court system by offering information and advice.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT



For the Sexual Harm Crisis Support Service (Crisis Service), new specialist roles created through Budget-19, such as referral coordinators and clinical leads enabled more tailored and responsive referrals.

With increased capacity, Crisis Service providers were more able to engage in proactive activities to identify new opportunities for relationships and service integration. For example, providers reported organising inter-agency days with local agencies and community groups, conducting stakeholder mapping exercises and quarterly hui with their local university, Kaupapa Māori agencies, ACC, Court Victim Advisors, Police, and Oranga Tamariki. Several Crisis Service providers mentioned initiating joint trainings with wider support services and communities. Efforts such as these were said to enhance the visibility of sexual violence services and boosted external agencies' trust in services.

Safe to Talk plays a vital part in the sexual violence support sector but contested expectations of its role hinders sector relationships

Safe to Talk (STT) is a 24/7 helpline offering anonymous support for people affected by sexual violence. The evaluation activities explored STT's role within the sector and the connections between STT and other sexual violence service providers.

Findings showed that sexual violence service providers use STT for contingency support and as interim help for those awaiting longer-term care. There was some discrepancy in expectations regarding their relationship with STT. Some providers wanted a more direct relationship and wanted the helpline to better understand their local sexual violence service. Others believed this was out of scope for a national helpline.

There were varying perspectives on STT's role in referring people to sexual violence service providers. It appears that STT's role has shifted from sexual violence service providers' initial expectations, based on the preferences of service users. Participants from STT highlighted that many callers are not seeking a warm handover and service users often expressed a preference to take time to consider their options for face-to-face support and reach out on their own. However, the lack of warm referrals and direct relationship with providers has resulted in frustration with, and low confidence in the helpline.

STT staff and some sexual violence service providers noted there was variability in the helpline's capability to support diverse service users. They noted a need for more training to better equip front line staff to support male survivors, individuals who experience concerning sexual ideation and engage in harmful sexual behaviours, and LGBTQIA+ service users.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT



For the Peer Support of Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Service (MSSA Service) providers, the work of Tautoko Tāne Male Survivors Aotearoa helped strengthen the inter-agency relationships across the country. As one of its key aims, Tautoko Tāne actively works with member organisations to expand the national network and build a community of providers. Tautoko Tāne bring providers together through the hui they host, and many of their initiatives have streamlined and standardised practice among MSSA Service providers. Inter-agency opportunities like these were considered valuable for enhancing the capability of both staff and providers.

Challenges

The ever-growing demand for sexual violence services is offsetting some of the benefits afforded by Budget-19

Despite an increased workforce, some providers are experiencing unsustainable workloads due to the level of demand for services. This poses a risk to staff burnout and may increase difficulty retaining staff.

While increased frontline capacity has granted some providers the opportunity to focus on strategic planning, the ongoing high demand for services has forced providers to prioritise frontline service delivery over organisational development.

Additionally, although some providers used Budget-19 funding to invest in service promotion, others decided not to, or actively removed advertisements, due to an ongoing fear of being unable to meet increased demand. Continued capacity constraints are also hindering inter-agency relationships and incoming referrals, with some providers even choosing to close referral pathways to avoid exacerbating existing waitlists.

The emphasis on timely engagement and reduction to waitlists (or maintaining no waitlist), has put pressure on staff across all services. These factors, coupled with significant increases in service user numbers, has led to unmanageable caseloads for MSSA Service peer support workers. This has negatively impacted staff wellbeing and, in some cases, meant MSSA Service providers were unable to offer service users their full suite of supports.

The sector faces challenges with recruiting, training, and retaining appropriately qualified staff

While Budget-19 funding has increased capacity, attracting qualified staff remains a challenge for services. Providers noted the dearth of counsellors and social workers qualified to deliver specialist sexual violence services, which they partly attributed to the absence of specific training courses offered at tertiary institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand. This also poses a barrier to further building the capability of the sector.

Retention continues to be an issue for providers, exacerbated by high caseloads, emotional burnout, and the difficulty NGOs face in meeting salary expectations. Recruitment and retention are especially challenging in rural areas.

Despite the availability of more training opportunities, the sector still faces a number of unmet training and professional development needs. For example, there is appetite for further training to help staff work in responsive ways with ethnically diverse, migrant, refugee, neurodiverse and LGBTQIA+ communities. Some providers also noted the absence of nationally consistent training and support for Court Support Service staff.

Providers want the security of long-term contracts and funding assurance

In order to ensure an expanded range of supports are available to service users, providers noted the need for ongoing investment. Financial constraints threaten the continuation and further development of treatment offerings, with some providers still struggling to offer comprehensive support for whānau due to limited resources.

Even though Budget-19 enabled a shift to longer-term contracts, some providers have reported that uncertainty about more enduring and sustainable funding continues to affect their ability to plan for the future. For some providers, this affects their ability to secure appropriate service premises. Providers also noted that the uplift in funding was not sufficient to cover rising rent and overheads.

Ongoing logistical support from MSD is needed

Some providers felt that MSD did not offer adequate support for the additional responsibilities that came with substantial funding increases or the creation of new services. They felt that MSD could add value by providing greater direction and support to the sexual violence sector. To increase the impact of uplifts in funding, MSD could provide more practical support to sexual violence service providers, such as identifying clear priorities for funding allocation, offering training opportunities, and facilitating introductions to key stakeholders.

A number Court Support Service providers spoke about the need for more support from MSD after a contract is signed. As one Court Support Service manager noted: *“Grateful that MSD decided to fund this service; on the other hand, that’s all that they did”* (Court Support Service Follow-up Interview). Providers felt there was a lack of direction from MSD related to best practice for service delivery and relationship building. While MSD service guidelines list key stakeholders, Court Support Service providers wanted more support to connect with individual representatives within their service areas. Relationships between providers and the wider Criminal Justice System are key to the success of the Court Support Service, with staff acting as the conduit between Police, the Crown, and Court Victim Advisors. However, without MSD’s guidance on these sector stakeholders at the start of their contracts, some providers initially struggled to cultivate these relationships and expressed disappointment that MSD had not provided more assistance.

Many Crisis Service and Court Support Service providers felt that the inter-agency relationships within their respective services could be strengthened and called for MSD to help facilitate this. Overall, sexual violence provider participants wanted MSD to help them connect with the wider sexual violence sector to support integration. They believed that MSD is best placed to integrate national services, such as the STT helpline, and facilitate networking, opportunities for training and the sharing of good practice.

There are still gaps in service accessibility and responsiveness, along with support gaps and limited capacity across the sector

Despite the improved availability and accessibility of specialist sexual violence services, geographical and support gaps remain, especially in rural areas. Providers noted the difficulty of recruiting qualified staff in smaller or more remote regions, and the inadequacy of budgets to cover travel for service users and staff.

The aforementioned lack of training and cultural supervision may be leaving gaps in service responsiveness for priority groups. As a result, some providers may struggle to meet the specific needs of service users from diverse backgrounds. As previously discussed, providers noted that this could be improved through further training and engagement with diverse communities.

Service availability also remains an issue for the wider sector, opening up gaps in care that sexual violence service providers may feel obliged to fill, including long-term sexual violence support and support for young people. Some service users face difficulties obtaining timely follow-up care after being referred to other wellbeing services (eg ACC sensitive claims service, public and private mental health services) following their engagement with sexual violence services. To ensure continuity of care, some sexual violence service providers take on the responsibility of offering ongoing support to these individuals until a proper handover can be made.

Conclusion and recommendations

Overall, the findings from across the evaluation activities indicate Budget-19 funding has increased capacity and capability of specialist sexual violence services in areas of both prevention and support for victim-survivors through: new service offerings; increased workforce capacity, training and professional development; expanded reach of services; strengthened relationships; and improved provider infrastructure.

The findings highlighted the continued challenges facing MSD-funded sexual violence services including: ongoing difficulties with recruitment; the ever-increasing demand for support; and geographical and support gaps that still exist despite increased funding. Some of these challenges cannot be addressed with funding alone and require support from MSD and our IEB partners.

Each of the evaluations have their own service-specific recommendations – please refer to the individual reports for these. The following recommendations build on these and are based on the evidence across all the evaluation activities in the work programme.

It is recommended that:

Contracts:

- MSD continue with long-term contracts for specialist sexual violence services.

Sustainable funding:

- MSD increase funding for specialist sexual violence services to support further growth of services and help meet high demand. The provision of more sustainable funding will further improve accessibility, strengthen capacity and capability, and help fill support gaps.
- MSD and other government agencies work collaboratively with the sexual violence sector to plan for where any additional funding is directed and prioritised.

Supporting the establishment of new services:

- During the development of any new services, MSD collaborates with service providers and key stakeholders in the SV sector to co-design service guidelines and resources, ensuring they are fit for purpose.
- MSD increase supports given to service providers during the establishment phase of new services. Required supports include the promotion of, and education about, the new service with key social and justice sector partners, building relationships across key partners and creating opportunities for a community of practice.
- MSD supports the delivery of any required training and resources for providers in the early stages of the roll-out of any new service to ensure a nationally consistent service.

Supporting growth of the sexual violence sector and workforce:

- MSD work with the Ministry of Justice to develop formal training and up-to-date resources for Court Support Service providers on the criminal justice and court systems.
- MSD work with our IEB partners to fill identified specialist sexual violence service training gaps to ensure support is responsive to the needs of the LGBTQIA+ communities, disabled people, neurodiverse people, Pacific peoples, and ethnically diverse communities.
- MSD and our IEB partners work with the tertiary education sector towards the inclusion of sexual violence support and HSB training options within clinical psychologist, social work, and counselling courses to support the development of the specialist sexual violence workforce.
- MSD and our IEB partners work with the tertiary education sector to establish better pathways from education institutions into the specialist sexual violence sector to help alleviate recruitment issues.
- MSD consider how we can work with sexual violence providers to ensure frontline service provision is supported by efficient organisational development.

Safe to Talk:

- MSD work with key sexual violence sector national bodies to re-establish and strengthen their connections with STT in order to clarify the role of STT in the sector, and support the development of training to upskill STT staff (especially in the areas of supporting male survivors, individuals who experience concerning sexual ideation and engage in harmful sexual behaviour, and LGBTQIA+ communities).

Sexual violence sector integration:

- MSD, IEB partners and key sexual violence sector national bodies work together to more regularly bring specialist sexual violence providers together to facilitate relationship building and improve sector integration.
- MSD and TOAH-NNEST provide greater support to bring the Crisis Service and Court Support Service providers together to facilitate relationship building, sharing of best practice and continuous service improvement.

Future research and evaluation:

- To support future evaluations, MSD works collaboratively with providers to improve reporting measures, ensure shared understanding of key definitions, and provide clear guidance on the collection and reporting of data.
- MSD conducts research that continues to support the development and continuous improvement of specialist sexual violence services. Research activities can support identification of best practice, development of training resources, and inform long-term planning.

Appendix A – Service information and Budget 19 investment in detail

Sexual Harm Crisis Support Service (Crisis Service) - offers support to adults in crisis due to experiences of sexual violence. It supports victim-survivors and their family and whānau. MSD funds 35 Crisis Service providers.

Peer support for Male Survivors of Sexual Violence (MSSA Service) - offers specialist support including peer support, advocacy, case planning and information for adult male survivors, their families and whānau and/or support network. The Ministry funds 11 providers to deliver support for male survivors.

Court Support Service - provides emotional, spiritual, and practical support to adult victim-survivors going through the criminal justice process. The Court Support Service was rolled out across four years and there are now 17 providers delivering the Court Support Service, including three Kaupapa Māori providers.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Service for Non-mandated Adults (NM-HSB Service) - offers specialist behaviour change interventions. The support is delivered in a community setting by clinicians trained and experienced in the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders. The Ministry funds three mainstream providers to deliver the NM-HSB Service.

Concerning sexual ideation service – specialist therapeutic intervention for adults who are experiencing harmful sexual thoughts or fantasies, but who have not acted on them. The Ministry funds three mainstream providers to deliver NM-HSB support.

Ministry's Budget-19 allocation, by service and funding type						
Service type	Funding type	19/20 (\$m)	19/20 (\$m)	19/20 (\$m)	19/20 (\$m)	4 Year total (\$m)
Crisis Support	Service delivery	5.380	14.915	14.915	14.915	50.125
	Design, implementation and evaluation	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.083	0.428
Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse	Service delivery	1.438	3.374	3.374	3.374	11.560
	Design, implementation and evaluation	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.093	0.438
Court Support	Service delivery	0.104	0.943	1.885	2.828	5.760
	Design, implementation and evaluation	0.179	0.179	0.115	0.115	0.588
Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Service delivery	2.309	3.002	3.002	3.002	11.315
	Design, implementation and evaluation	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.093	0.438
Concerning Sexual Ideation	Service delivery	0.309	0.494	0.618	0.741	2.162
	Design, implementation and evaluation	0.179	0.179	0.115	0.115	0.588
Kaupapa Māori	Service delivery	1.059	1.295	1.363	1.532	5.249
	Design, implementation and evaluation	0.475	0.475	0.410	0.345	1.705
TOTAL		11.777	25.201	26.142	27.236	90.356

Appendix B – Synthesis approach and limitations

Synthesis Approach

A thematic synthesis method¹² was used to synthesise findings from each of the evaluation data sources. This method goes beyond summarising and comparing findings across multiple sources. The thematic synthesis involved a re-interpretation of the findings to provide an overarching understanding of the impact of the Budget-19 funding across MSD-funded specialist sexual violence services. This was guided primarily by the key evaluation questions, the overarching evaluation aims, and the theory of change (see Appendix C).

Using NVivo, findings from each of the data sources were extracted and clustered according to each evaluation question. Themes were developed both inductively and deductively across the data sources. The themes were then interpreted in light of the evaluation questions, while also considering the context in which the data was produced.

Findings from the synthesis highlight how MSD-funded sexual violence service providers, service users and the wider sexual violence sector experienced the impacts of the MSD Budget-19 funding.

For a full exploration of limitations from each individual evaluation, please refer to the respective reports. The constraints related to the individual evaluation activities within the Budget-19 evaluation workstream may affect the interpretations and analyses of the synthesis.

Limitations

Only elements of the evaluation approach could be implemented

A Collaborative Realist approach was intended to be used. This approach draws on elements of Realist Evaluation and Collaborative Outcomes Reporting. It is a theory-driven approach, that allows for mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative), explores the role of context, and involves a range of stakeholders in the evaluation process.

Although elements of the Collaborative Realist approach were used, limitations hindered its full implementation. The evaluation addresses the role of context and factors influencing the funding's impact on sexual violence services. However, due to insufficient data for different groups and a narrow focus on MSD Budget-19 funding and MSD-funded sexual violence services, it was not possible to explore "what works for whom, in what circumstances, and how?"

12 Thomas, J., Harden, A. Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Med Res Methodology* 8, 45 (2008). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45>

The mixed methods approach planned to analyse MSD sexual violence service data from 2018-2023, but a review revealed significant gaps and concerns about the data's reliability and quality. As a result, it was decided that the data did not meet the necessary standards for inclusion in the evaluation.

The evaluation workstream findings are limited in their generalisability and representativeness

While qualitative data collected through the evaluations produced rich and detailed insights into the experiences of those impacted by the increase in the Budget-19 funding, it is not intended to be generalisable. Findings reflect the perspectives of those who participated in the evaluations and cannot be considered representative or generalisable to those who did not participate.

There were challenges with the recruitment of service users particularly for the Crisis Service and Court Support Service evaluations

The recruitment of service users proved to be a challenge, especially for the Crisis Service and Court Support Service evaluations. The individual reports for these evaluations provide full details on all challenges faced.

The evaluations cannot determine whether reported impacts are a direct result of the Budget-19 funding

The evaluations focused on the impact of the MSD Budget-19 funding package on MSD-funded sexual violence services. Causal attribution is usually an essential part of impact evaluations. However, the complex funding environment and difficulties in the ability to focus on individual parts of a wider funding package, make causal attribution difficult.

Comparison with a counterfactual was not possible

Comparison with a counterfactual is commonly used to assess whether an initiative is responsible for impacts and outcomes. This involves comparing observed impacts to those expected if the initiative had not been implemented.

It would not have been feasible to develop a counterfactual in this case due to challenges predicting what might have happened in the absence of Budget-19 funding. Additionally, in the sensitive area of sexual violence, ethical concerns make a counterfactual approach unsuitable. The evaluation also could not control for external factors that could potentially explain the impacts.

Appendix C – Theory of change (Side A)

Theory of change - Impact of Budget 2019 funding on sexual violence services

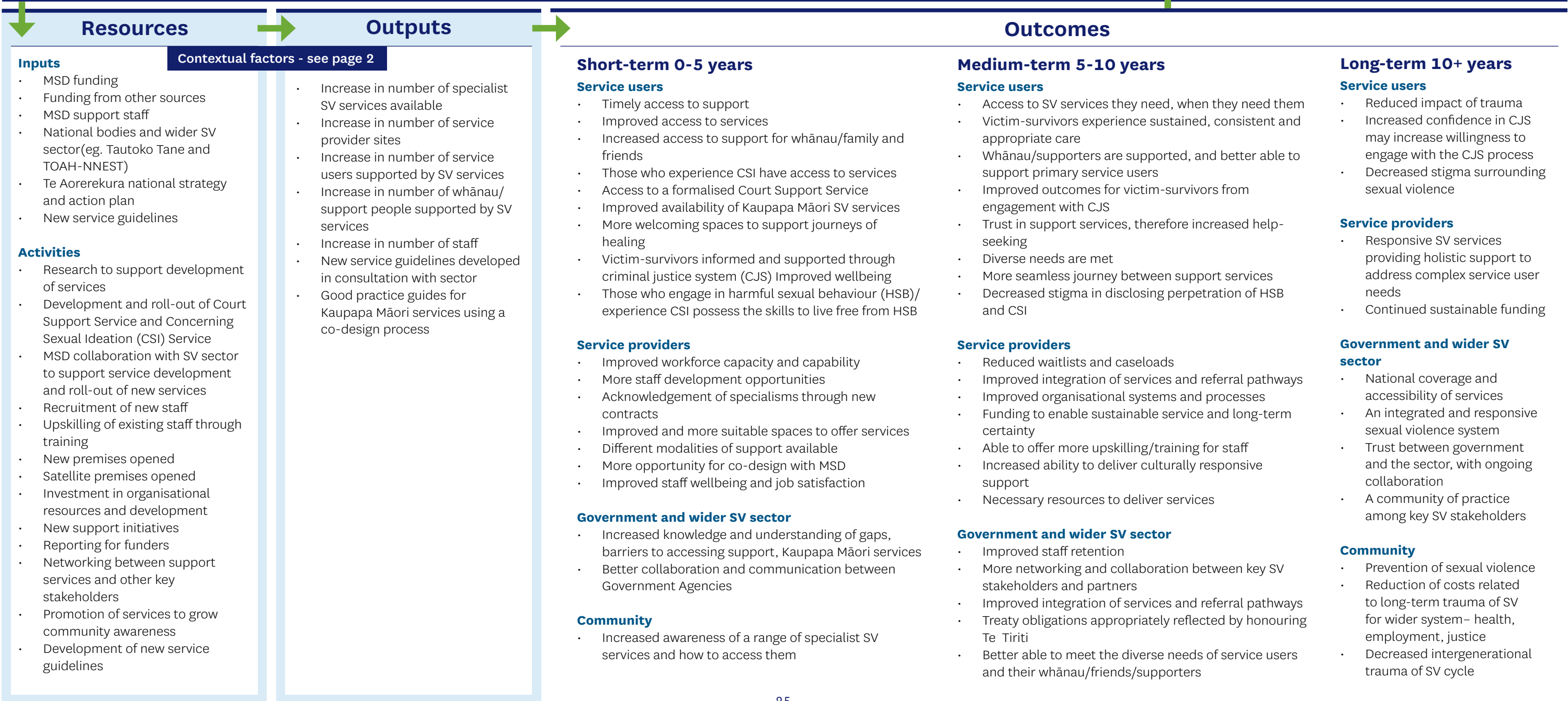


Problem Statement

Sexual violence (SV) is one of the key social problems undermining the health and wellbeing of people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Those affected by SV require specialist support and treatment to reduce trauma, increase wellbeing and prevent further SV. However, there are gaps in service provision for a number of groups, including male survivors, victim-survivors going through the court system, people who experience concerning sexual ideation and specialist Māori SV service provision. Further, services are often not adequately funded to meet demand, funding is insecure and there is a lack of funding specifically to target service gaps.

Goal

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Budget 2019 funding aims to create a more sustainable and integrated national system of services to ensure people affected by SV get what they need at the right time. It is a move towards more sustainable and ongoing funding for services. It aims to increase access to services for those affected by sexual violence and expands coverage of services – including providing specialist psycho-social support for victims of sexual violence through the court system, support services for adults experiencing concerning sexual ideation and kaupapa Māori SV service provision.



Appendix C – Theory of change (Side B)

Theory of change - Impact of Budget 2019 funding on sexual violence services

Context

Factors within the environment that help or hinder the ability of the resources to achieve the desired outputs and outcomes

- Ability to recruit, retain and train appropriately qualified and experienced staff
- Accessibility of the service, including service location, and available service modalities
- Legacy of competitive MSD funding model
- Quality of interagency relationships
- Infrastructure capability
- Stage of service development
- Stage of organisational development
- Staff workload and wellbeing
- MSD culture (eg Te Tiriti institutional racism)
- Joint Venture/TPA/IEB action plans
- Kaupapa Māori organisations are underrepresented and have limited geographical reach

Assumptions

Factors, circumstances that are assumed, and necessary, to ensure the desired outcomes related to the Budget 2019 funding can be achieved

- Increase in funding is sufficient for roll-out of new services
- Increase in funding is sufficient to support sustainable services
- Increase in funding is sufficient to cover support for whānau/family and friends
- Increase in funding is sufficient for appropriate geographic coverage of SV services
- Sexual violence services can recruit, retain and train appropriate staff to deliver services
- Support from MSD to help develop services
- Need and demand for a range of specialist SV services

External environment

Factors beyond immediate control, which can influence outputs and outcomes

- Lack of knowledge of SV support and prevention work as a career pathway
- Courses offered by tertiary institutions lacking modules specific to SV support
- Higher salaries for staff working in government positions than at NGO providers
- Societal perceptions of SV
- Societal stigma for victim-survivors of SV and those who perpetrate SV
- Covid-19 pandemic
- Cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures
- Increased help-seeking behaviours due to movements such as #MeToo and Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry
- Over-representation of groups in sexual violence statistics, including Māori, Pacific Peoples, disabled people, LGBTI+, and those who identify as female/wāhine