

14 September 2021

Tēnā koutou katoa e ngā pūioiorau o tērā kāwai, o tērā kāwai,

The community social services sector has an unprecedented opportunity to achieve pay equity for all people working in social work roles in our sector in Aotearoa, through a pay equity claim currently lodged against five representative employers.

Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA) is coordinating the employer response to the claim and working to represent the interests of the community social services sector.

We believe we have an opportunity to achieve pay equity not only for people in social work roles in the five employer organisations in the claim, but for the community social services sector as a whole. This includes Iwi social services, kaupapa Māori services, NGO and all community social services that employ people in social work roles.

We are committed to responding to the current claim as a united sector — working together for a sector-wide solution. In that spirit, this letter gives you an overview of what has been happening since the claim was lodged, our next steps, and how you will be able to stay involved and informed.

Our objectives

We are seeking pay equity for people in social work roles in community social services and parity with Oranga Tamariki counterparts. A whole-of-sector solution is required: any settlement for the current claim must be applied across the wider community social services sector, not just this representative group.

Our community social services also need full and fair funding of contracted services, to address underfunding that has driven the pay equity gap. We are raising this as a separate but related issue alongside the claim settlement process.

Pay equity must not result in any reduction to social worker numbers and services. Community-based social workers play an essential role in supporting child, rangatahi and family and whānau outcomes and we will be ensuring maintenance of services is recognised in the negotiations.

Achieving a sector-wide solution

SSPA has taken the lead to coordinate the pay equity claim and is committed to seeing this through to a successful settlement. We will keep the wider sector informed about developments and soon we will be inviting SSPA members and non-members who are employers of people in social work roles to join together with us to ensure our collective voice is heard in the negotiations with government.

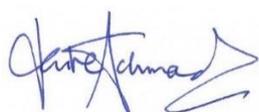
It will be important that the provider sector is standing together so everyone has the opportunity to be part of a wider sector solution.

Key information about the pay equity claim process so far

- **In 2019, the PSA lodged a pay equity claim against five employers of people in social work roles:** Barnardos, Christchurch Methodist Mission, Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services, Stand Tū Maia and Wellington Sexual Abuse Help.
- **The claim was triggered by the 2018 settlement of the Oranga Tamariki social worker pay equity claim.** This has widened the pay gap between Government and community social workers and others who support the delivery of social services.
- **A complex review and bargaining process is progressing.** We have completed much of the groundwork, including validating that community social workers do comparable work with other social workers and assessing the size of the pay equity gap. We will soon begin bargaining.
- **We are raising the need for full and fair funding** of government-funded services as a separate but related issue alongside the claim settlement process.
- **The PSA, SSPA and the five employers in the claim agree it is vital that any settlement of this claim be extended to all community social workers.** It is therefore seen as a representative claim on behalf of the whole sector.
- **It is expected that a sector-wide solution will need to be agreed with the Government in order for pay equity to be addressed for all community social workers.** Any such, solution is likely to be implemented through the contracting process with funders, with related funding to flow via the employers through to employees via employment contracts.

We have included more detail in an **attached backgrounder**, which we encourage you to read to learn more. You can also keep an eye on our website which has a dedicated Pay Equity page now live at <https://sspa.org.nz/pay-equity>. We will continue to keep you updated as the process moves ahead in coming months – please make sure you add payequity@sspa.org.nz to your list of safe senders so you can be sure to receive our email updates.

Nā māua noa, nā



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