

Election asks 2026

Social
Service
Providers

Te Pai
Ora o
Aotearoa



Mokopuna and whānau

Our vision

Aotearoa New Zealand is the best country in the world to be a child. It is a place where mokopuna and whānau have the conditions needed to thrive.

Our challenges

- Aotearoa New Zealand can be a dangerous place to be a child: 1 in 7 children are living in hardship (Stats NZ, 2025) and on average every six and a half weeks, a child dies from abuse or family violence (Child Matters).
- Mokopuna and whānau across Aotearoa are increasingly struggling under the ongoing cost of living crisis. Social services providers are often seeing whānau who can't stay well, eat regularly, get to school or mahi, or access essential services.
- The increasing price of fuel is adding to this hardship.

Building a sustainable future

- We are calling for all political parties to make the immediate alleviation of hardship for whānau and mokopuna to be a priority this election. Policies could include inflation-adjusted benefits, a 'gold card' for children, and/or redistribution of taxes so that families can afford to live.
- We want government agencies to be actively monitoring the impact of high fuel costs on communities, whānau and mokopuna so that there is a clear understanding of what response is required.
- We need to action the recommendations from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care and undertake a transformational change of the care and protection system, to one where children's interests are at its heart.

"Take care of our children. Take care of what they hear. Take care of what they see. Take care of what they feel. For how the children grow, so will the shape of Aotearoa."

*Dame Whina
Cooper*

"Every day our sector kaimahi bring their care, aroha and support as they walk alongside our most vulnerable mokopuna and whānau. They are helping to shape the future of Aotearoa."

*Belinda Himiona,
Te Pai Ora SSPA,
Kaiwhakahaere,
CE*



Social services sector

Our vision

Social services are devolved to communities through co-designed, long-term sustainable contracts. We have sustainable and effective partnerships between government and the social sector with fair pay and conditions, and a widespread shared understanding of the value we add.

Our challenges

- The community-based social services sector represents hundreds of non-profit providers across the motu providing critical care on behalf of government to at-risk whānau and mokopuna. These services include child protection, family violence prevention, sexual violence prevention, youth work, family support, counselling, housing and homelessness support, disability care, aged care and foster care.
- Our sector has been underfunded for years: research found that social service providers are funded for about two thirds of the actual costs of our work. In a time of growing need, we are increasing struggling to meet these needs.

Building a sustainable future

- We want all government contracts for social services to be inflation-adjusted and reflect the true cost of critical services for mokopuna and whānau.
- We are calling for the way the government procures and commissions social services to be consistent, sustainable and joined up across agencies, and for a move to longer-term contracts to ensure stability of services.
- We want greater devolution of social services to community organisations.

Kaimahi

Our vision

Social services kaimahi are valued as skilled specialists and paid fairly for the hugely important services they provide to communities, whānau and mokopuna.

Our challenges

- Our kaimahi are expected to work harder, with less. Retention and recruitment is a significant issue and was identified as the biggest challenge facing the profession in the 2025 Social Worker Workforce Report.
- The passing of the Equal Pay Amendment Bill cancelled 33 pay equity claims for more than 180,000 women – many of them from the social services sector.

Building a sustainable future

- We are calling for pay equity across the sector and for salaries for our kaimahi that reflect the amazing work they do with mokopuna and whānau.
- We want paid placements for all trainees in the social services sector.

“...we must have social service providers who have the courage to keep going. Here today there are some of the bravest people I have ever met. The courage of you all, to take on the work you do, in some of the most complex situations is remarkable.”

*Minister for Children,
Karen Chhour
Whakamanawa 24*

“Your sector’s value goes beyond fiscal counting - you are humanity’s frontline and without your work, we cease to be human.”

*Marama Davidson,
Green Party co-leader
Whakamanawa 25*