



21 August 2024

Family Start Collective

Tēnā koutou,

FY2024/25 FUNDING DECISIONS: FAMILY START PROGRAMME

I am writing to you directly as you will soon receive a letter, if you have not already, from your respective contract managers confirming our investment decisions for FY2024/25.

These are not decisions made lightly – but are important decisions that we stand by.

I understand that for some, these decisions will present a challenge. I know your organisations do great work and I want to thank you for your service to the community. I acknowledge that this process has created a level of uncertainty for you, but year on year we need to ensure that we are providing the right funding for the right services to meet the needs of children in our care and those who have come to our attention.

Attached is a Q and A in response to some of the questions I have received, including about staff reductions and clarification of decisions.

I want to be clear that only Oranga Tamariki is authorised to speak to the decisions we have made and the Q and As help clear up any confusion there might be.

Finally, our staff will work with you directly on your contracts and next steps over the coming days. However, please be aware that our contract managers are not authorised to negotiate changes in levels of funding or terms and conditions.

If you have any questions regarding your contract, please contact your contract manager in first instance or email provider_questions@ot.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrin Haimona", written in a cursive style.

Darrin Haimona
Deputy Chief Executive – Enabling Communities and Investments

FAMILY START FAQS

Question: Chappie's email to Belinda Himiona said that, to be clear Family Start providers should not be making staff redundant if contracts are reduced based on underutilisation as these FTEs were never filled. If providers in this situation are making staff redundant, they should contact Darrin or Kara who will work with them.

Does this mean that the reductions will no longer be applied and we can keep our staff?

Answer: There are no changes to the decisions made about the reduced amounts for Family Start funding.

We note there were significant vacancies over the past 18 months across Family Start providers. Our general position is that these should only be filled in line with new funding levels communicated by Oranga Tamariki.

Oranga Tamariki is responsible for making funding decisions.

Employers are responsible for their own employment decisions and the allocation of funding. Thank you to those of you who reached out to Darrin and Kara.

Question: Why have these changes been made?

Answer: These changes have been made in line with the quantity and quality of service delivered in FY24, assessed in line with your contract with Oranga Tamariki. The rationale for our decision not to continue paying for underutilised volume is to prioritise that resource to children and young people in our care. We acknowledge our continuing responsibility to contribute to preventative, community-based work, but we must ensure the children and young people in our care have their needs met first and foremost.

Question: What happens to children, young people and their families receiving Family Start services that we no longer support to the same extent?

Answer: Reductions are aligned to utilisation levels.

For services being reduced, provision has been made to support you to align the service with new funded volumes and safely transition tamariki, rangatahi or whānau receiving the service to another service. Our expectation is that you will manage this process with your clients. Your contract manager and/or advisor can provide you with advice and support if needed.

Question: What if we don't agree to the reductions?

Answer: We are seeking to work with providers to agree a timeframe for introducing the reductions, and to understand and consider the costs to providers of reducing these services. Where we are not able to quickly reach agreement, Oranga Tamariki will need to consider using the options available for reduction of volumes under Outcome Agreements.

Question: When should we expect contract variations to be processed?

Answer: Contract variations are in progress. When we issue these, they will need to be responded to rapidly. Please reach out to your contract manager/advisor if you are ready to engage.

Question: What is happening with the Pay Equity uplift?

Answer: For those of you who receive the Social Work Pay Equity Extension Funding, you were emailed by the Oranga Tamariki Chief Financial Officer in mid-June requesting information and data to enable us to baseline all Social Work Pay Equity Extension Funding. We need this information to complete this and cannot proceed without it. We expect this work to be completed shortly and we will engage with you in September.

Question: Is funding still available to support visits to whānau in rural communities?

Answer: Unfortunately, not. We have removed the rural visits component and believe that travel costs embedded in the rate is sufficient to support rural visits.