



THE PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

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Susan Fernandes
Project Coordinator
Ministry of Health
Private Bag 92522, Wellesley Street, Auckland
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Dear Ms Fernandes

Re: RFP for Communication and Behaviour Support Services for Children and Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Midland, Central and Southern Regions; ICN ref: 37083

The Paediatric Society of New Zealand is pleased to note that the Ministry of Health intends to purchase Autism Spectrum Disorder specific Communication and Behaviour Support Services.

The Society also notes the release of the BSS report. We agree with the principal findings of the report that current services are of variable quality and that access to such services is variable.

Our members strongly support the provision of effective Behaviour Support Services for children and young people with disability including ASD. We agree that provision of Behaviour Support Services for those with ASD requires in depth understanding and knowledge of ASD.

We note that early intervention for children and young people with challenging behaviour should prevent escalation of these behaviours with consequent reduction in level of need for costly residential services in the future.

We also note that the RFP requests DHB engagement in an area of contracting that has previously been the province of Disability Support Services and contracting has been managed by the Ministry without consultation with DHBs or clinicians. We are pleased that a wider process is now envisaged.

Members of the Paediatric Society of New Zealand want to see:

- Comprehensive and co-ordinated and sustainable Behaviour Support Services. This requires active engagement from a range of agencies and cross sectoral participation. Ensuring co-ordination and participation from all who need to be involved takes time.
- Fair access to services across the whole of New Zealand. No child or young person should be disadvantaged because the DHB in which they live has not submitted a proposal.
- While some DHBs will collaborate on a regional basis, some will not for a wide range of reasons. Clearly there are economies of scale in collaboration, but there are also risks. 16 DHBs preparing 16 different proposals is a significant volume of work and is not in anyone's best interests in the current constrained environment.

We ask that the time frame for submission of these RFPs be extended to allow DHBs and child health clinicians to develop proposals that will be sustainable into the future. The issues relating to behaviour support in children and young people with ASD are complex and these proposals are too important to be rushed.

We also ask that these processes be co-ordinated with the implementation of the review of Behaviour Support Services in a way that ensures that children and young people with disability receive services through a child-focussed and family/whanau whanau centred approach.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosemary Marks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Rosemary Marks
President