



## Upper Clutha Social Services Snapshot

Baseline survey results - Feb 2019

### Community Networks Wanaka

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# OVERVIEW

## Participation

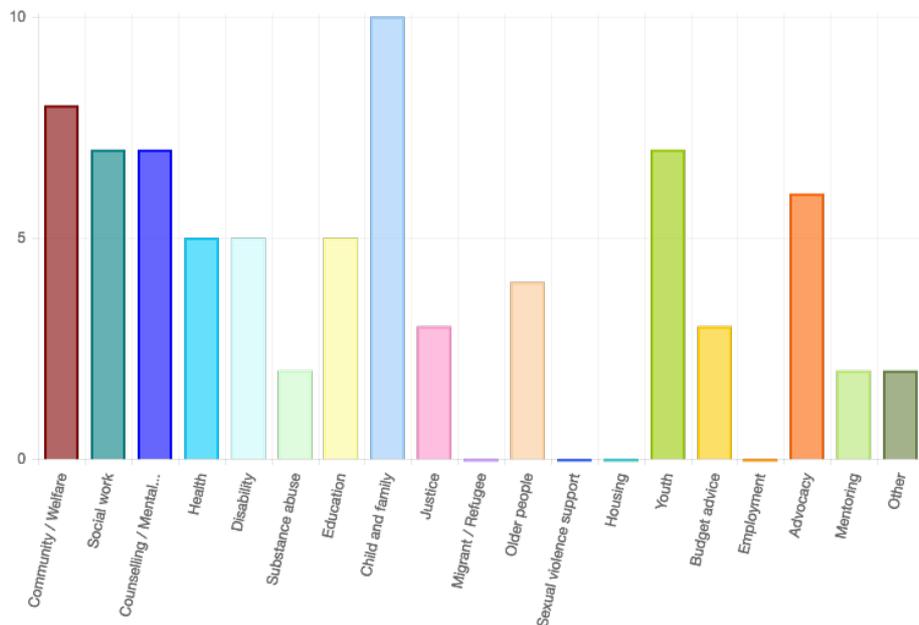
Twenty-seven services took part in the first Social Services Snapshot, a response rate of 57%. The 27 services represent 20 organisations. Eleven (44%) are based in the Upper Clutha, and 14 (56%) are based elsewhere but cover the Upper Clutha. All participating services:

- Have their primary purpose, mission or focus the social or health needs of the community.
- Work with their clients face-to-face.

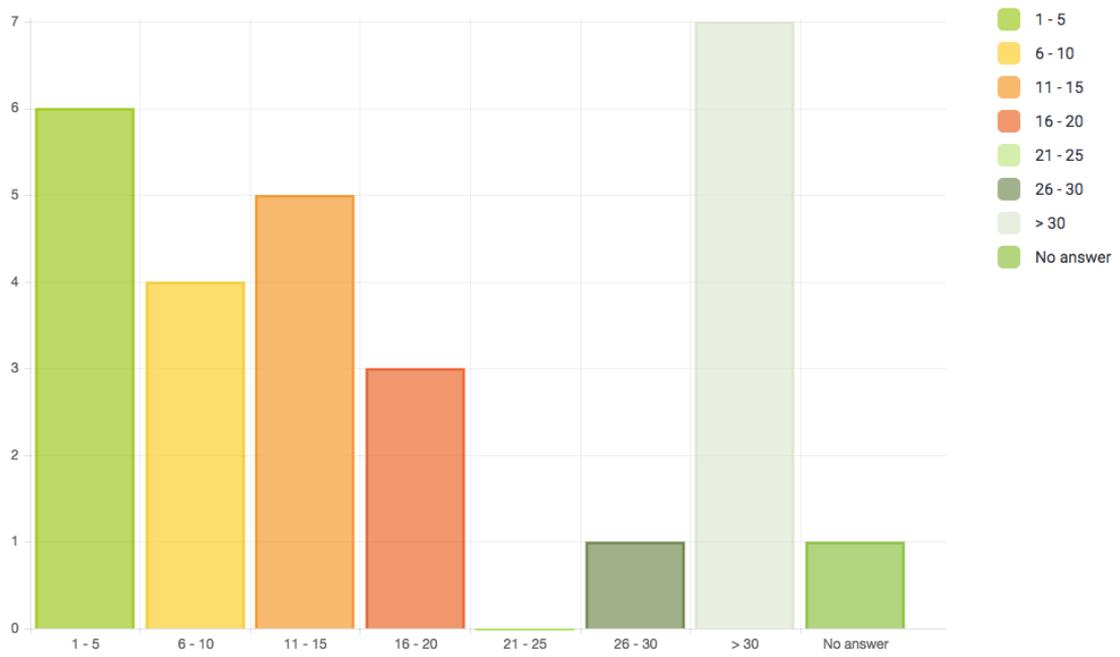
## Service types

The Snapshot data represent a broad range of services (**Figure 1**). The most common services delivered by participants were community/welfare, social work, counseling/mental health, child and family, youth and advocacy. No participants provided migrant/refugee, sexual violence support, housing or employment services.

A good balance of small, medium and large services (in terms of local average monthly caseload) is represented in the Snapshot data (**Figure 2**).



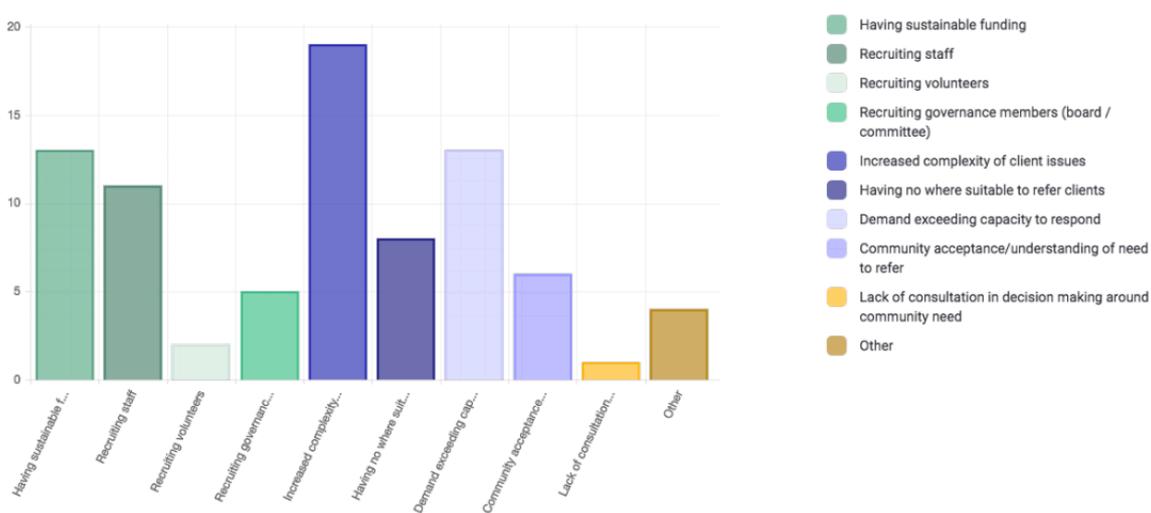
**Figure 1** Services or activities provided by Snapshot participants (number of services)



**Figure 2** Number of services reporting average monthly caseload

# ISSUES IMPACTING LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Seventy percent of services reported being impacted by an increased complexity of client issues in the past six months (n = 19, **Figure 3**). Almost half reported that demand for their services exceeded their capacity to respond. Having sustainable funding was an issue for almost half the services. It was very common for services to be impacted by staff recruitment (40%). Other common issues included having nowhere to refer clients (30%) and a lack of community acceptance of the need to refer (22%). Less common were difficulty recruiting governance members (19%) or volunteers (7%), and lack of consultation in decision making around community need (4%). Three services were being impacted by a lack of suitable facilities (in the 'other' category).



**Figure 3** Issues impacting Upper Clutha social services (number of services)

# CLIENT EXPERIENCES

## Wait time

Only seven services (26%) reported being able to see their clients face-to-face for the first time within a week (Figure 4). A further seven (26%) reported an average wait time of 8 to 14 days. The clients of seven other services (26%) had to wait more than two weeks for their first face-to-face meeting. Six services did not answer this survey question.

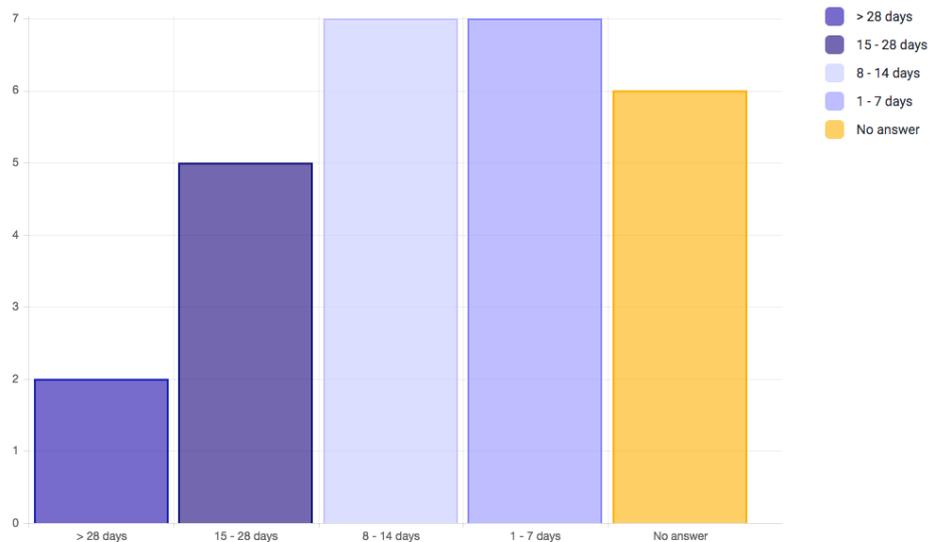


Figure 4 Number of services reporting average client wait-time for first fac-to-face meeting

## Significant issues

To gauge the *variety* of issues significantly impacting the lives of Upper Clutha Social service clients, Snapshot participants were asked to identify issues they’d seen in the past six months (Figure 5). The number and proportion of services reporting clients being significantly impacted by each issue is listed in Table 1, in order (highest to lowest). Most services reported having clients significantly impacted by poor mental health, financial hardship and parenting issues. Less common were employment problems.

Table 1 Number and proportion of services reporting issues having significant impact on their clients’ lives in the past six months

Significant impact on clients	# Services (%)
Poor mental health	21 (78%)
Financial hardship	19 (70%)
Parenting issues (child behavior, custody, neglect)	19 (70%)
Relationship / Family problems	18 (67%)
Social isolation (no friends, family or neighbors who could provide support)	17 (63%)
Cost of living (food/fuel)	16 (59%)
Lack of available housing	13 (48%)
Poor physical health / Physical disability	12 (44%)
School issues (behavior, truancy, bullying, exclusion, expulsion)	11 (41%)
Substance abuse	11 (41%)

Addiction (substance, gambling, technology)	10 (37%)
Family harm (domestic violence)	9 (33%)
Difficulty navigating service system	7 (26%)
Lack of access to social services	6 (22%)
Justice system issues	5 (19%)
Lack of free emergency health services	4 (15%)
Poor communication from government organisations	4 (15%)
Underemployment / Unemployment	3 (11%)
Employment problems (harassment, visas, trafficking, payment)	1 (4%)
Discrimination (sexual, racial, age, socioeconomic)	0 (0%)

## Most common issues

To gauge what the biggest issues were among Upper Clutha social service clients in terms of their prevalence, Snapshot participants were asked to identify the *top three most common issues among their clients*. The issues are listed in order of prevalence in **Table 2** and displayed in Figure 6. The most common issues were poor mental health, financial hardship, social/relationship/family problems and lack of affordable housing.

**Table 2** Number and proportion of services identifying issues as being in the top three most common among their clients in the past six months

Issue	# Services reporting issue in top three most common (%)
Poor mental health	13 (48%)
Financial hardship	8 (30%)
Parenting issues (child behavior, custody, neglect)	7 (26%)
Relationship / Family problems	7 (26%)
Social isolation (no friends, family or neighbors who could provide support)	7 (26%)
Lack of affordable housing	7 (26%)
School issues (behavior, truancy, bullying, exclusion, expulsion)	6 (22%)
Poor physical health / Physical disability	4 (15%)
Substance abuse	4 (15%)
Lack of affordable services	3 (11%)
Family harm (domestic violence)	2 (7%)
Addiction (substance, gambling, technology)	2 (7%)
Difficulty navigating service system	2 (7%)
Lack of available services	1 (4%)
Employment problems (harassment, visas, trafficking, payment)	1 (4%)
Distance from specialist health services	1 (4%)
Declining health impacting on functional independence	1 (4%)

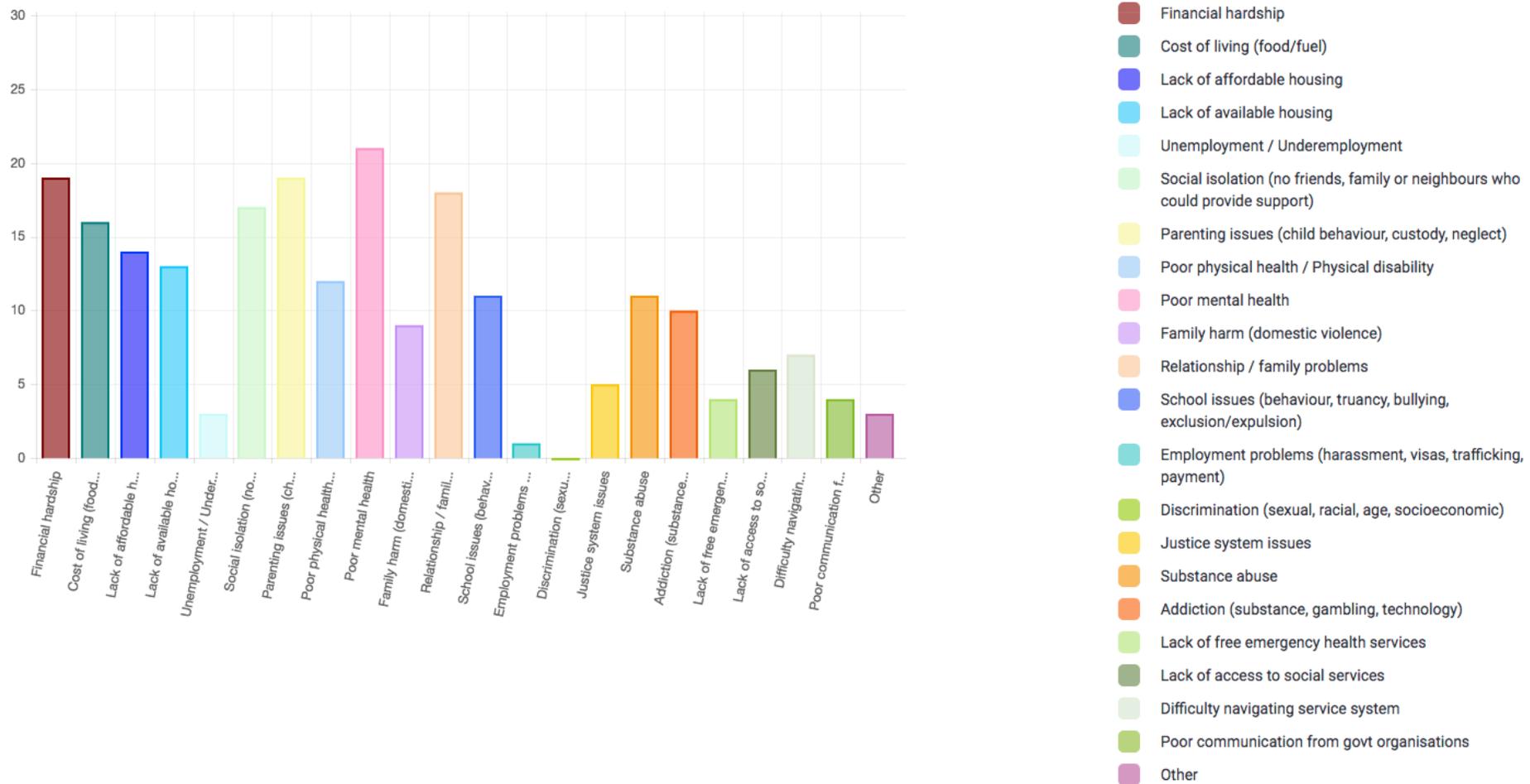


Figure 5 Number of services reporting issues significantly impacting their Upper Clutha Clients in the past six months

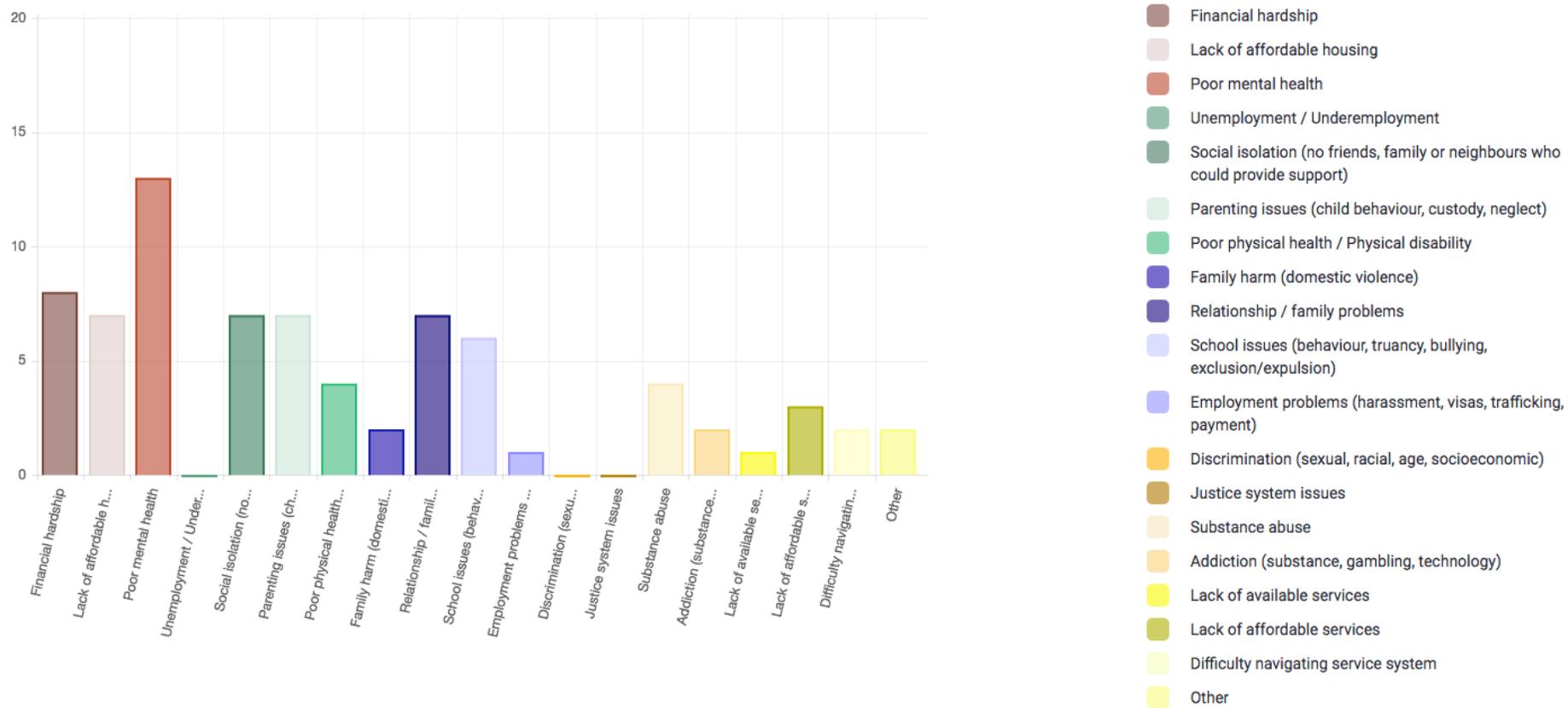


Figure 6 Number of services selecting each issue as being one of the top three most common among their clients in the past six months

# LOCAL SERVICE GAPS

Snapshot participants were asked an open-ended question about whether they had noticed any gaps in local services, in the context of their own clients' needs. Most (81%) listed at least one service gap. Just over half of the comments related to gaps in mental health services. All participant comments are thematically itemized below.

Identified service gap	# Services reporting gap
<b>Mental health</b>	
• Lack of local practitioners	2
• Lack of timely access to practitioners	2
• Lack of support for mild to moderate difficulties	2
• Lack of services for children/youth	2
• Lack of support groups for children/youth	1
• Lack of anger management counseling	1
• Lack of relationship counseling	2
• Prohibitive cost	1
• Lack of access to clinical psychologists	1
• Lack of psycho-education for young people and families	1
• Lack of addiction services	1
• Lack of free counseling	2
• Poor access to brief intervention service	1
Lack of special needs support for 18 to 24 year old's	1
<b>Housing</b>	
• Lack of housing (general)	1
• Lack of social housing	1
• Affordability	1
Meeting current service demand	1
Lack of visiting service	1
Lack of Workbridge service	1
Lack of respite care	3
<b>Child, youth and teen</b>	
• Lack of public transport to other local centres	1
• Lack of specialized youth agencies	1
• Lack of neonatal nursing support	1
<b>Travel</b>	
• Cost of out of town services	1
• Distance to out of town services	1
<b>Medical services</b>	
• Prohibitive cost	1
<b>Families</b>	
• Support groups for families with children with behavioral difficulties	1

# CONCLUSIONS

Social services play a vital role in the Upper Clutha community. Their staff and volunteers support vulnerable people and families every day. Yet many services are operating under funding, demand and/or staff recruitment pressures. Most are dealing with increasingly complex client needs, often with nowhere to refer them.

The most common difficulties among the clients themselves were poor mental health, financial hardship, housing costs, and poor social and personal relationships. Nearly every service reported having clients significantly impacted by poor mental health, yet the most commonly reported gap was mental health services. Seven counseling or mental health services participated in this Snapshot. Demand for their services clearly outstrips their resources for supply. Excess demand was common to almost half of the Snapshot services of all types.

Financial hardship was very common among the participants' clients. Without the presence of local social services, these clients are unlikely to get the support they need. The other most common issues were all related to social and personal relationships. These issues would also be remediated, to some extent, with the provision of more local mental health services, including respite care. There is room in the community for more support groups, for example, for caregivers or families with children with behavioral difficulties.

## The next Snapshot

The first Social Services Snapshot was well supported by local services, with a good range of service types and sizes participating. The next Snapshot will be conducted in August 2019. Repeating the Social Services Snapshot every six months will allow us to track our progress, monitor trends, and identify emerging issues. Local social services that would like to join the participant list can contact Kate Murray:

[kate@communitynetworks.co.nz](mailto:kate@communitynetworks.co.nz).

The Snapshot survey and reporting tool is available for use in other communities. Please contact Vanessa Hammond to find out more: [Vanessa@tawarata.nz](mailto:Vanessa@tawarata.nz)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Finally, we are very much indebted to the services that took part in this baseline survey and look after the vulnerable members of our community. It is our hope that they will all benefit from this growing evidence base.