



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Ministry of Social Development and Seniors

**MINISTRY POST BUDGET PRESS BRIEFING
REMARKS:**

Monday, 27th February 2022
A.B. PLACE

The Hon. Tinee S. Furbert, J.P., M.P.
Minister of Social Development and Seniors

Good day Bermuda,

I am grateful to be here today to share with you key initiatives that will be supported by the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors 2023/24 Budget allocation.

The Ministry's budget has increased by 8%, reflecting a total budget allocation of twenty-six million, four hundred and thirty-nine dollars (\$26,439,000).

This funding covers the operations of the Ministry Headquarters, the Department of Child & Family Services, Ageing & Disability Services, and the K. Margaret Carter Centre.

The increase in the budget allocation will allow the Ministry to continue to be effective in executing its responsibility of formulating and advancing social policy initiatives in Bermuda that aim to protect all individuals during their lifetime and that facilitate their well-being.

The budget increase also demonstrates our continued commitment to Bermuda's most vulnerable and cherished population groups: our children, persons with disabilities, and our seniors.

The Ministry of Social Development and Seniors has ensured that the services and programmes offered by the Ministry will directly impact and improve the overall well-being and quality of life for these population groups.



Ageing and Disability Services

The Ministry has budgeted an additional one hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars (\$165,000) to support Ageing and Disability Services in the purchase of a Structured Decision-Making Tool.

Decision-making for adult protection is most complex due to difficulties in reliably assessing the capacity of older adults for decision-making during ethical dilemmas raised when adults refuse services.

This tool is aligned with the remit of Ageing and Disability Services, which is to support and protect Bermuda's seniors and persons with disabilities who are at risk of abuse or self-neglect.

A Structured Decision Making System comprising four assessment and implementation tools will reliably provide protective services to Bermuda's adults 18 years and older who are at risk. The first phase of establishing this System will be implemented during the 2023/24 budget year.

Department of Child and Family Services - Independent Living Programme

With the responsibility of protecting Bermuda's children and strengthening our families, the Department of Child & Family Services has been given an operational budget of \$18.8 million. This reflects an increase of \$1.1 million.

Roughly \$284,000 has been budgeted for staffing needed for the opening of an Independent Living Programme. This is the first of its kind in Bermuda in that a 'lifeline/safety net' is being provided to young adults ageing out of Government care.

The community-based programme will provide housing, case management support, guidance, and connect them to educational, vocational, and life skills coaching with the



opportunity to develop a comprehensive set of daily living, social, and communication skills.

This will provide our young adults with the best opportunity for success as they transition into adulthood.

Litigation Guardian Framework

As a further testament to our commitment to protecting our children, the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors has been very diligent in developing a Litigation Guardian Framework.

To ensure that the focus on the welfare of our children is paramount, the work that has been undertaken has been intentional in strengthening the partnership with the Courts.

During this current budget year, a new team of Litigation Guardians were trained in analytical writing for case reporting and essential litigation guardian best practices.

Additionally, training was provided for the Managers and Social Workers in the Department of Child and Family Services, members of the Family Court Panel, Judges, and Acting Magistrates.

This work will continue during the 2023/24 budget year to further develop and strengthen the Litigation Guardian Framework.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

To support the vulnerable population of those in our community who find themselves victims of domestic abuse, a total of ninety-six thousand dollars (\$96,000) has been budgeted to commence the 2022 Throne Speech Initiative of introducing a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) model in Bermuda.

This model will empower key agencies to engage in a more coordinated plan of action to help reduce domestic



violence. At the heart of the MARAC model is that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim, but the combined insights are crucial for their safety.

This budget allocation will fund the hiring of a Domestic Abuse Specialist to support victims at all risk levels and the implementation of phase one of the MARAC model.

Work has already commenced with the Department of Child and Family Services and the Bermuda Police, in partnership with UK SafeLives.

Charitable Organisations

The Ministry of Social Development and Seniors will continue to provide grants to Third Sector Organisations that provide needed social services and programmes.

Additional funding has been allocated to support the charitable organisations HOME and Tomorrow's Voices.

With homelessness, a growing concern in Bermuda, effecting the needed strategies and programmes will be essential to provide those persons already homeless and those at risk of being homeless with shelter and security to meet their needs.

The Ministry also recognises how crucial it is to support services and programmes for our youth who experience autism or who are on the Autism Spectrum, and will grant Tomorrow's Voices an increase in funding.

Additionally, we will continue financial support of the following Third Sector Organisations:

- Age Concern - \$25,000
- Women's Resource Centre - \$75,000
- Center Against Abuse - \$150,000



- Care of the Blind (now known as Vision Bermuda) - \$15,000
- Nursing and Residential Homes - \$1,445,000
- Meals on Wheels - \$50,000
- Salvation Army - \$550,000
- Summerhaven - \$600,000
- Tomorrows Voices - \$30,000
- Home - \$50,000

Conclusion

Other key initiatives that will be steered by the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors during the upcoming budget year include:

- The release of a five-year National Plan for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families
- The establishment of a National Child Safeguarding Policy
- Foundational work to improve long-term care for seniors, which will feed into the development of a National Seniors Strategy and assist with direction for long-term care that may be needed by people of any age

Bermuda, the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors is diligently working to support initiatives that demonstrate the Government's ongoing commitment to



improving the social well-being of our youth, our seniors, and persons with disabilities, which all contributes to a path to a better Bermuda.