

WA facing DV funding crisis

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Family and domestic violence services in WA will be slashed if the State Government doesn't increase funding to cover mandated employee pay rises.

That's according to peak services in the sector who say some police stations will not have support for those in need on certain days of the week, and in one case Relationships Australia says it will have to halve the services it has available to provide training to men who have previously been perpetrators of abuse.

Services will also have to close completely over Christmas — one of the biggest stress times for family and domestic violence — for up to four weeks.

And the impacts could be felt from next month with the

services predicting they will have to spend between 5 and 8 per cent less time with clients. In some cases all work with perpetrators will cease.

Other organisations that will be affected include Women's Health and Family Services, Anglicare, Centrecare and the Pat Giles Centre.

John Bouffler, executive director of Community Employers WA, which represents not-for-profit employers in the non-government sector, said wage cost increases averaging between 23 per cent and 45 per cent over the past six years because of legislated wage increases by the Fair Work Commission meant the current financial support from Government was not enough to continue services.

He said the stall in contract

negotiations was coming at the worst time, when there was a spike in abuse in families.

One provider said its calls were up 30 per cent. Year-on-year threatening behaviour has increased 16 per cent, and family assault offences across WA are up 8 per cent in the year through to April this year.

A spokeswoman for Social Services Minister Anne Ruston said: "We stand ready to work closely with States and Territories to allocate further funding to where it is most needed as we come out on the other side of this crisis".

The Department of Communities said it "has not been advised by any of these services of a need to close".

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