

# Disability Support Services

## November 2024



New Zealand Council Of  
Christian Social Services

### Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on Disability Support Services. We support the kaupapa by the Ministry of Social Development to understand how disability support services can be improved. NZCCSS advocates for greater accessibility of disability support services for tangata whaikaha | disabled people, their whānau and those who work alongside them.

### Taunakitanga | Recommendations

Our main points are:

#### 1. Greater transparency and ownership of funding decisions

NZCCSS is concerned that the way decisions about funding, and changes to funding, are made and communicated lacks transparency and is not mana-enhancing. This has been and continues to be a constant challenge with the disability support system which is confusing, unsettling and is an example of changes being 'done to' rather than 'done with' those most affected. Greater ownership and honest communication about what funding is available and how it will be distributed would provide clarity for all and improve levels of discontent among the community.

**Recommendation 1: NZCCSS advocates for greater transparency in how funding decisions are communicated.**

#### 2. Greater cohesiveness between health and disability services

The current siloed approach to health and disability services creates barriers to access for those with disabilities and does not recognise their specialist support needs. There are opportunities to make changes that would greatly improve the accessibility of health services and enable greater equity for disabled people. Examples include greater collaboration between and colocation of services, increasing the current 15-minute GP appointment timeframes or resourcing disability support roles in public hospitals. We observe gaps in support for mental health services where a person's diagnosis means they are ineligible due to their concerns being deemed behavioural rather than psychological. We also observe gaps in support for the increasing group of people with high and complex needs which require multidisciplinary responses.

**Recommendation 2: NZCCSS advocates for increased cohesiveness between how health and disability services are delivered.**

#### 3. Adequate resourcing to ensure aspirations for the sector can be realised

NZCCSS highlights the pressure on providers resulting from inadequate resourcing to deliver on the Enabling Good Lives approach and respond to recommendations under the United Nations Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities which New Zealand ratified in 2008. We are supportive of these aspirations for the sector, such as the move away from institutionalisation, however the current model of funding makes these approaches unsustainable.

**Recommendation 3: NZCCSS advocates for greater understanding and alignment between funding expectations and service delivery costs.**

#### **4. Increased visibility of disabled people and their voices in decision-making**

NZCCSS believes the voices of disabled people should inform decision-making at all levels and that there should be greater recognition and prioritisation of disabled people in government strategies, action plans and budgets. We see this as essential to ensuring effective delivery of supports and addressing the disproportionately poor outcomes experienced by those with disabilities and their whānau.

**Recommendation 4: NZCCSS advocates for greater visibility and prioritisation of the views and needs of disabled people.**

#### **Ko wai tātou | Who we are**

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 230 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. We believe in working to achieve a just and compassionate society for all, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website [www.nzccss.org.nz](http://www.nzccss.org.nz).

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