

**Disability  
Support Services**



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

# Weekly Report

**Week ending 4 October 2024**

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

**Hon Louise Upston**

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# Office of the Deputy Chief Executive

Lead: Chris Bunny, DCE, Disability Support Services

The transfer of DSS staff and functions to MSD has progressed well:

- 171 people work within DSS delivery. This includes people working in the regions and at EGL demonstration sites.
- 11 people work within the Taskforce. The biggest team is the policy and data workstream, at six people.

We are still recruiting into the Taskforce as we confirm the policy and engagement programmes and as we identify the budget management steps needed to ensure that budgets are met in 2024/25.

DSS staff numbers will grow further with the phase two transition expected to be completed following consultation by 1 December. You will receive advice shortly with more information regarding the phase two transition.

Our priority for October is engagement and building our relationship with the sector. People and organisations have already reached out wanting to share their experiences, perspectives and suggestions for DSS. Your office is also sharing the details of people who express an interest in meeting their correspondence with you, and we are actively responding to those and scheduling meetings.

Anne Shaw, Associate DCE DSS, returns from leave on Monday 7 October 2024. She and I will be travelling over the coming weeks meeting staff, organisations in the sector, and the community, and will share the themes from those meetings across our network and channels.

## Disability Support Services Delivery

### Associate DCE comment

Lead: Al Hill, Programme Director DSS Taskforce

This week, we delivered the first tranche of additional training to the NASCs on the process that was followed when determining 2024/25 budgets. We also reinforced messages around our expectation that for NASCs operate consistent with the operational policy and within annual budget caps.

We have also started developing further tools to support NASCs with their budget forecasting processes.

NASCs' communication with us regarding budgets appears to fit into three main categories:

- seeking assistance in understanding their obligations and actions they need to take,
- advising that they do not believe they can place people into services and supports within budget, and
- case-specific matters from other agencies like Oranga Tamariki.

We will update you as these conversations develop.

9(2)(a)



On Tuesday 1 October a small protest was held outside the DSS office in Wellington. This was related to an individual funding package and unrelated to the August announced review or work programme.

## **NASCs and EGL sites overview**

Lead: Rachael Burt, Group Manager, Operations and Enabling Good Lives

### **EGL sites**

EGL sites continue to work with clients to review plans and allocations, to understand how alternative supports and connections could result in lower cost or community packages. Mana Whaikaha is about to undertake a review of Residential Care with a focus on identifying people who can and who want to move out of residential care into community living arrangements. Enabling Good Lives Christchurch and Enabling Good Lives Waikato will work to apply these learnings.

In contrast to NASCs, there is less concern about whether EGL sites will be able to remain within their budgets.

### **NASCs**

This week delivery of more training around understanding budgets has been rolled out to NASCs. This will continue for the remaining groups through next week. By late



October we will have a clearer picture about each NASCs performance, in combination with assurances they have reported regarding their budget management.

Interim data for August and September shows people are still being accepted into residential care although at a lower level than previous months. We are building formal reporting to monitor and manage this more closely and will share that with your office soon. We are also intending to report on residential capacity if possible.

9(2)(a)



### **Next steps**

The next round of NASC and EGL site reporting is due next week. At that point, DSS will consider what additional action should be taken to meet your expectations that expenditure on DSS remain within its current appropriation.

### **Behaviour Support Specialist Services**

There continues to be high demand for specialist services (e.g. intensive behaviour supports). Delays in accessing behaviour support services are system wide, and due to the long waiting list to access bulk funded services.

EGL sites have reported situations where there is high safety concern for the disabled person and their primary caregiver. In response, EGL connectors are taking some immediate (reactive) measures engaging mainstream services (for example, family violence services), while the most appropriate (preventative) supports are sourced. Other providers have reported similar concerns, including our largest community residential provider.

We are running a report to understand the wait list profile, for example timelines, demographics, care settings, regions. We will assess options in how we address this pressure. This may require immediate steps in the short term while longer-term settings are reviewed. We will consider the viability of any one-off funding injection that can address this pressure as an immediate next step, accepting that workforce capacity may also be a contributor.

We can provide a more detailed briefing with our findings/options by the end of October, if required.

## **Review Panel overview**

Lead: Rachel Daysh, Group Manager, System Design

The Review Panel ('Panel') has now held six meetings. Over this period the Panel reviewed 27 referrals in total. Of these, 15 were endorsed and 12 not endorsed due to missing information or the need for further clarification.

Despite initial high volumes of both general enquiries and referrals, the initial backlog has reduced and volumes that meet criteria and go to Panel are now low. The Panel considered two referrals at its meeting on 3 October.

The quality of information provided in referrals varies between NASC/EGL sites, resulting in clarifications and resubmissions required. This will improve over time as NASC/EGL sites better understand the requirements learn from with feedback.

We plan to review and provide an updated Terms of Reference to respond to requests for clarification. The wider Assurance Team is also working to develop robust reporting and data collection processes. We are also providing feedback to NASC/EGL sites that have provided high quality referrals and will look to use case studies to support other NASCs/EGL sites to meet the same standard.

## **Capability uplift update**

Lead: Catherine Poutasi, Director, Commissioning

There are six workstreams in the Capability Uplift programme:

1. Strategic planning for commercial outcomes
2. Commissioning/commercial Strategy (including commercial engagement with stakeholders)

3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Supplier relationship management
5. Culture and leadership
6. Enabling technology.

### **Status update**

- Updating implementation plan from previous quality rapid assurance review
- Training plan for DSS Operations staff completed.
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities related to escalations, is now progressing. Terms of reference for this work are being signed off this week.
- Risk and Assurance are completing a complaints and incident process map. This is a key dependency on creating resource capacity within the function to allow the other uplift work to occur.
- Risk analysis training with DSS Operations Managers is ongoing.
- Commercial provider segmentation analysis with DSS Operations Managers - ongoing. Analysis determines a differentiated service offering for providers based on the level of risk and value associated with the relationship and service provision.
- Procurement uplift initiatives ongoing.
- DSS internal procurement process updated as a result of transition and will be finalised by end of October
- Sector payments and online contract management system work continues. This includes work related to general ledger. Contracts are likely to move into a new online contract management system in June 2025.
- Invoice rejection system related work continues. Partnering with top 10 providers and developed processes to ensure providers can accurately invoice based on approved allocations and reduce the number of invoices rejected by the system (still ongoing work required).
- Operational reporting work has progressed. Monthly reports being developed across Operations team.
- Outcome agreement management plans for providers are being prioritised by Operations team (requirements will be tailored to different segments of market).
- Technology road map released for feedback. Changes to the operating model/strategy will impact the roadmap.

## Upcoming milestones

- Contract management, relational commissioning, DSS specific commissioning (including financial delegations) and probity training will be completed for DSS operations staff by end of October 2024
- MSD procurement training by end of October 2024
- Finalise governance structure of workstream and implementation plan
- Updating three-year procurement plan.

## Updates on ongoing work

### Pay Equity

Lead: Carmela Petagna, Director, Office of the Associate DCE

Pay equity, and the steps underway to reach a sector settlement of the Care and Support Worker (CSW) Pay Equity Claim continues to be an unresolved fiscal risk for DSS and is a concern for sector providers. Providers have expressed concerns that the framework being applied in this next stage of work is not transparent, in comparison to previous processes.

Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora (HNZ), as lead funder in the claims, is driving a revised process announced in March of this year. It has engaged with all affected funders to call on our support to assist with the process, especially with workforce data gathering.

DSS purchases almost \$2 billion per annum in supports that are largely support worker delivered. We therefore have an interest in a settlement being reached that avoids disruption to supports for disabled people, while also remaining affordable to the Crown.

There are three active claims, representing some 65,000 CSWs, and around 280 individually named employers. This covers four sectors (disability, aged residential care, home and community, and mental health). A sector-wide solution is being sought, with some ambitious milestones communicated.

With the transfer of DSS into MSD, we continue with the responsibility for ensuring our CSW workforce data is well reflected in the data gathering exercise HNZ is undertaking. We have also connected with our MSD colleagues, to ensure we stay well aligned.

Our primary aim is to ensure that our DSS financial exposure is well understood, and accurately reflected in any advice provided to Treasury and Ministers. We understand the first milestone for reporting back to Government of 31 October, is unlikely to be met. Health NZ is likely to seek an extension out to February 2025.

DSS has a small team of technical specialists working up approaches on how we ensure the best workforce data picture is provided to HNZ especially within the Individualised Funding settings (IF Hosts and Personal Budgets). This is a challenging area as it involves many small employers, and the care and support worker components of that funding may vary from person to person. The team is also considering options for how a potential settlement would be implemented.

This is high-risk for DSS, as given current financial constraints, there will be little scope for provider (and funder) contributions, so the 'offer and accept' processes in any settlement will require dedicated focus and resource to ensure we stay very close to this process.

This work is currently being absorbed by a small team over and above their business-as-usual activities. DSS is monitoring the level of work involved in this process to ensure that it continues to be adequately resourced.

We are developing a briefing for our Associate DCE, and DCE, to outline details of the approach being taken to source workforce data and consider implementation options.

We will continue to update you as matters evolve.

## **Hearing Aid Services**

Lead: Rachael Burt, Group Manager, Operations and Enabling Good Lives

The Aged Care Commission (The Commission) or representatives of the hearing industry may approach you requesting Disability Support Services (DSS) increase the Hearing Aid Subsidy.

In March 2024, The Commission released the report [Amplifying the voices of older people in Aotearoa New Zealand – Health & Disability Commissioner \(hdc.org.nz\)](https://www.hdc.org.nz/publications/2024/03/amplifying-the-voices-of-older-people-in-aotearoa-new-zealand) documenting preventative actions through the Dementia Mate Wareware initiative, which focuses on implementing the Dementia Action Plan. One of the actions is reviewing and increasing hearing aid funding.

DSS contributes to the cost of hearing aids for people with hearing loss. Currently, some people receive fully funded hearing aids (see: [Guide to Getting Hearing Aids:](#)

[Hearing Aid Funding Scheme | Ministry of Health NZ](#)), with most other people eligible to receive a \$511 subsidy towards the cost of each hearing aid.

DSS does not generally fund hearing aid assessment services. This means that most adults need to access private audiology services, pay for the cost of assessment services, and contribute to the cost of hearing aids.

In 2023/24 DSS invested \$37 million towards hearing aids. DSS also invests \$2.9m per annum for aural rehabilitation services to provide free advice on managing hearing loss to adults. The service provided includes hearing health tests, communication strategies, hearing assistive devices, and hearing health awareness, but doesn't cover the assessment for and provision of hearing aids.

Health New Zealand (HNZ) provides audiology services including assessment, fitting of devices and follow-up services which are mostly targeted to children.

We have no plans to increase the level of funding for the hearing aid subsidy.

We responded to one media request regarding funding for hearing aids and batteries this week. We can provide a more detailed briefing on the future workplan and options on request.

## **Paid Family Carers Litigation**

Lead: Ryan Moran, Chief Legal Advisor

9(2)(h)



9(2)(h)

## Communications and media

Lead: Ruth Laugesen, Manager Media and Social Media; Alison Horwood, Whaikaha Head of Communications and Engagement

### Digital Update

#### Top three web pages - 23-29 September 2024

The Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha website saw significantly less traffic last week, with page views dropping by more than half.

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. <a href="#">Home</a>                | 1,717 views |
| 2. <a href="#">Carer Support</a>       | 907 views   |
| 3. <a href="#">Purchasing Guidance</a> | 700 views   |

Other webpages of interest

<a href="#">Independent Review</a>	378 views
<a href="#">For service providers</a>	173 views
<a href="#">What people can buy with disability funding</a>	596 views
<a href="#">Fact sheet: for people receiving DSS</a>	193 views
<a href="#">Fact sheet: Recommendations 1-7</a>	350 views
<a href="#">Individualised Funding</a>	596 views

## Overall themes on social media

There have been concerns expressed, mainly in non-Ministry channels, about deaths in care, and funding applications being declined if a person was diagnosed with Autism via telehealth. We have responded to both topics in mainstream media.

There has also been contact by a small number of people via Ministry social media channels because they were declined funding to get a NZSL interpreter for tasks such as meetings with lawyers. An interim guideline was prepared in July 2024 to assist with prioritising high needs requests for interpreter services. We are working on commissioning NZSL responses to these social media queries.

## DSS / Taskforce media

Key themes in media queries over the last week were:

- Disability support equipment funding
  - What assistance is available to help with the ongoing cost of hearing aids when someone turns 18.
  - What assistance available to a single mother for epilepsy support sleeping mat for 10-year-old son who has been denied Work and Income support for this.
- Investigation of deaths at disability care providers
  - Following a claim from NZ Disability Support Network that these deaths showed the system is underfunded and this is causing strain on providers.
- Residential care bed availability
  - Number of care beds available in New Zealand and specifically Otago and whether there is a wait list.
- Establishment of DSS within MSD
  - Request for interview with Chris Bunny. The interview was turned down and written response provided.



# Taskforce weekly status update

## Programme Director comment

Lead: Al Hill, Programme Director DSS Taskforce

Note: this content is being drafted before the officials meeting on 3 October 2024.

This week we have focused on the balance between the operational changes and the policy changes needed to support stabilisation of DSS. The policy roadmap provided in the document pack for our officials meeting on 3 October 2024 puts the operational policy changes alongside your intended proposals for the December Cabinet decisions. Following conversation with you about the policy roadmap, we will provide you with a more detailed report seeking your agreement on actions to be taken before the end of the year.

We are currently working with the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha on two joint reports:

- advice to you regarding your options for Vote arrangements
- an update on the phase two transition.

Satellite issues we have contributed to this week include:

- Crown Law closing submissions for WAI2575
- Whaikaha's advice to you regarding your meeting with Autism NZ
- Whaikaha's advice to you regarding the Ministerial Leadership Group on Disability Issues

9(2)(h)

## Workstream updates

Workstream	RAG	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Transition of DSS to MSD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up an online form to capture feedback from DSS kaimahi on the first phase of the transition and identify areas of improvement for the second phase of the transition.</li> <li>• Commenced IT preparation work for the 2nd phase of the DSS to MSD transition, capturing lessons learned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-October: joint report to the Minister on split of functions and funding.</li> </ul>

		<p>from Phase 1 and confirming the required resourcing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whaikaha and MSD are working together on completing the functional and positional analysis of roles to identify which roles would transfer to the respective agencies.</li> <li>• Commenced the review of shared services with the service owners and delivery leads to understand the impact of the transition on the shared services provided to Whaikaha.</li> </ul>	
<b>Design of future systems and operations</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondment arrangements for lead are being finalised.</li> <li>• Recruitment for workstream members underway.</li> <li>• Reporting and business rules commissioned for monthly reports for NASC budgets; residential support entries, exits, and vacant beds; and assurance and Review Panel processes.</li> <li>• Analysis underway for NASC Budget and Allocation reassessment programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-October: regular reporting for implementation of recs 1, 2 and 3</li> </ul>
<b>Policy and data</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be discussed at our officials meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 October: chew session</li> <li>• 18 November: commence agency consultation on SOU paper</li> <li>• 5 December 2024: lodge paper for SOU</li> </ul>

## Engagement update

Lead: Kat Norman, Communications and Engagement Lead, DSS Taskforce

### Engagement Strategy on a page

Engagement Strategy on a page is completed.

**Communication and engagement plan** Next steps include developing a detailed communications and engagement plan, key messages and channel strategy.

### **DSS website**

Whaikaha content review and migration planning is underway. This website ([disabilitysupport.govt.nz](https://disabilitysupport.govt.nz)) is due to go live on 25 October and will provide the option for both disabled people and providers to subscribe to a newsletter to receive the latest updates.

### **Interim DSS landing page**

DSS landing page was set up on 16 September and the Whaikaha website directs people across when the query is related to DSS. This landing page is an interim measure until the above website goes live.

There is a need to communicate out to the sector and community with an update of the work of the Taskforce. We will use this landing page as an interim measure to publish weekly updates what we've heard, what our view is/what we're doing about it and what's coming up next. publish an update out to the sector and community which will include what the Taskforce will and won't be doing prior to Christmas. The Taskforce will share this information with various organisations to share with their networks.

### **Key priority engagements for DCE**

Priority engagements are in the process of being set up for the DCE.

Current confirmed engagements include Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) Coalition, Aged Care Association, Mana Pasefika, Manawanui.

DCE and ADCE confirmed priority engagements include IDEA Services, Lifelinks, Health and Disability Commissioner.

Other additional priority engagements being set up are: New Zealand Disability Support Network (NZDSN), Brackenridge Services Ltd, Supported Individualised Lifestyle Choices, Spectrum Care, Taikura Trust, Your Way Kia Roha, NZNASCA and EGL sites.

30–31 October – DCE and ADCE will be travelling to Auckland and Waikato to meet with DSS Ops teams, Waikato EGL sites and others.

### **Disability Support Services Conference**

The DCE will be speaking at the Disability Support Services Conference in Auckland on 14 October. This will provide an excellent opportunity to connect with providers.

# Official Information Act requests

No new Ministerial Official Information Act requests this week

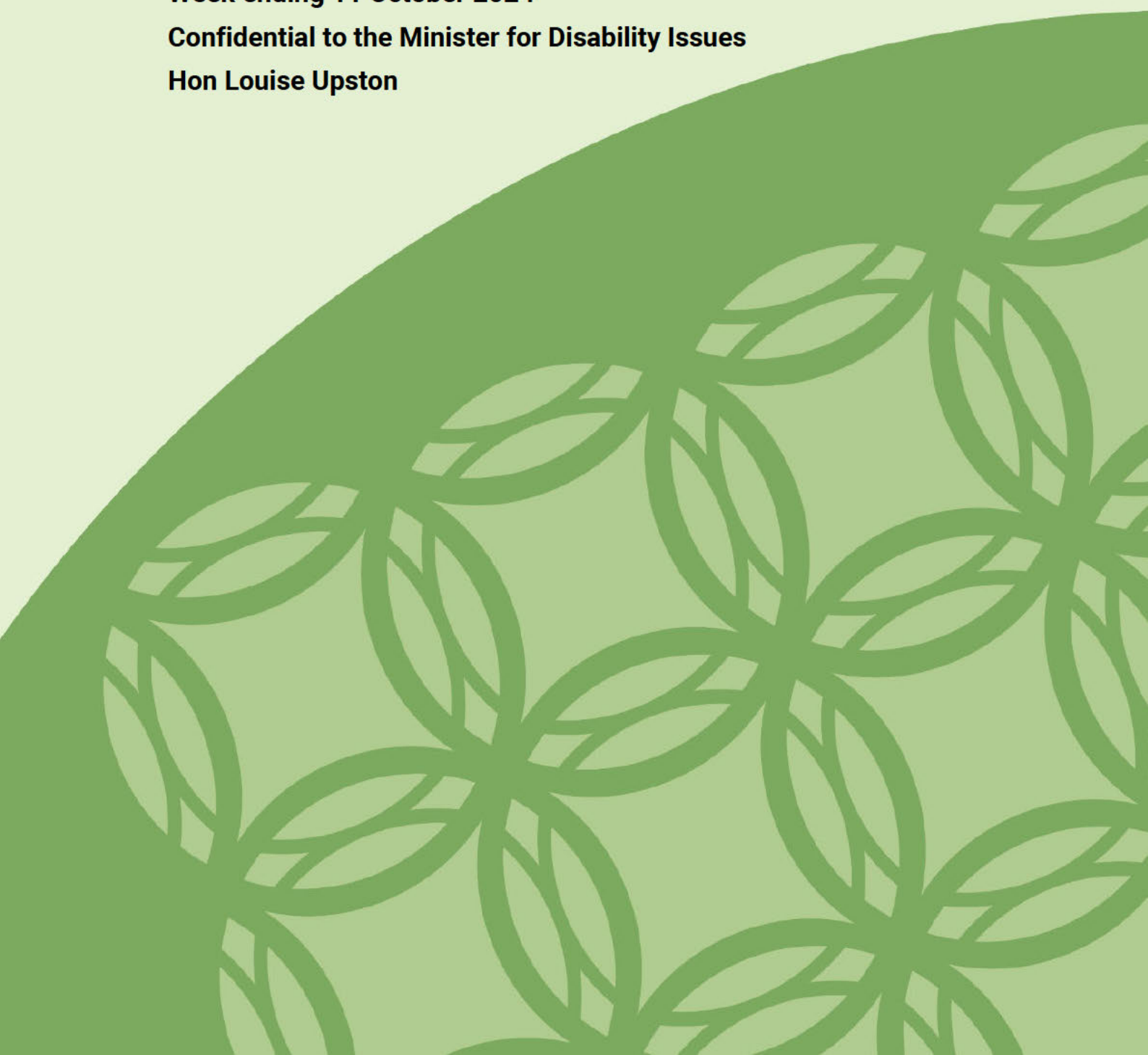
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# Weekly report

**Week ending 11 October 2024**

**Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues**

**Hon Louise Upston**



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# Disability Support Services Delivery

## Associate DCE comment

Lead: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE

We have three active legal cases to update you on:

- The Supreme Court has granted leave to appeal the paid family carers litigation referenced in last week's weekly report.
- A signed funding agreement has been received for the individual whose funding package was the subject of a small protest last week and whose carer has brought proceedings against Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha (MoDP)/Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to the Employment Relations Authority. The first payment will be made on 11 October 2024. This has averted potential future protest action, that had been threatened by the family.
- We will appear in the Family Court next week in a case relating to a young person transitioning from Oranga Tamariki to DSS when they turn 18 years of age. DSS and Oranga Tamariki are working jointly to respond to the Court. We have a plan in place to support continuity of care for the young person. We are also preparing an operational policy regarding inter-agency transfers.

We continue to work with Ministry of Health officials on the High and Complex Framework. That work includes refreshing a Memorandum of Understanding following the transfer to MSD, discussions regarding various agency accountabilities and a pathway forward for future work. Our clinical advisor, who supports this work, is now only providing support to the Review Panel and this leaves us with a gap on clinical advice in the High and Complex Framework. We will recruit a replacement as soon as possible.

DSS leadership met with senior officials from Health New Zealand (HNZ) this week to discuss mutual areas of interest. We identified a number of areas where we have agreed short-term work to consolidate contracts, which will provide savings and reduce administrative burden for both agencies. These include Residential Intellectual Disability Secure Services (RIDSS), Child Development Services (CDS) and Dual Funding arrangements.

We are also looking at how we can work with HNZ to improve waitlists and the interface with the Ministry of Education for CDS. HNZ has agreed to share its performance approach for NASCs, and we have commissioned a piece of discovery work to understand how we might review the service delivery model for RIDS services we contract through HNZ. We will keep you updated on these workstreams.

On 7 October 2024, we delivered reporting to NASCs covering:

- actual spend report for services in NASC and residential budgets delivered in July to September 2024
- a tool to help them understand their residential forecasts
- 'Claims Lag' analysis to help them understand their data. For context, some of our services are claimed for payment months after the service period. This information enables NASCs to have better visibility in managing their budgets.

NASCs' quarterly qualitative reports are due next week. This will give us insight into their progress and challenges, in responding to the Independent Review Recommendations 1-3.

We are considering whether any operational policy changes could assist NASCs better manage budgets while retaining the overall cap on residential expenditure. The qualitative reports will assist this work.

## **NASCs and EGL sites overview**

Lead: Rachael Burt, Group Manager, Operations and Enabling Good Lives

### **NASCs**

We have completed training sessions with NASCs on how their budgets were developed. Our position remains consistent that the funding available will not increase; NASCs must manage within their allocated budgets.

Actions toward developing a clearer picture of NASC expenditure include:

- Developing templates for NASCs to report their monthly forecast expenditure and identify how they are managing the risks that expenditure may be higher than forecast.
- Continuing to provide NASCs with expenditure information so they can develop a better understanding of expenditure against their budget.
- Provision of monthly payment data to NASCs – they have three months data to date.

### **EGL Sites**

Connectors in the EGL sites continue to meet with families to review plans and community support allocations to identify alternative arrangements where appropriate. Areas that sites are looking at include facilitating mainstream supports and services to become more inclusive of disabled people, thereby reducing the need for DSS funded support. We expect to see reductions in costs in coming weeks.

Mana Whaikaha has started its review of Residential Care, with a focus on supporting people who wish to move to community care. Supporting people to exit residential care can take time. It will be several weeks before concrete results emerge from this work.

We are confident that EGL sites will stay within their budgets.



## Review Panel overview

Lead: Rachel Daysh, Group Manager, System Design

The Review Panel ( the Panel) continues to meet weekly. This week, the Assurance team has assessed three referrals against meeting criteria, and these have been forwarded to the Panel for endorsement.

The running total of referrals now stands at 30, and volumes continue to remain manageable. The Assurance team continues to develop and future-proof processes.

The Panel data has been made publicly available at: [Review Panel data | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](#) and has been shared with NZDSN.

## Capability uplift workstream updates

Lead: Catherine Poutasi, Director, Commissioning

We continue to develop the ongoing programme of work for capability uplift – largely to respond to the Link report. This week's activity follows:

- We are leading an alignment exercise with other DSS projects and programmes to ensure clear accountability and identify dependencies.
- Measurement reporting indicates that the invoice rejection system related work is having a positive impact. This work involves partnering with top 10 providers and developed processes to ensure providers can accurately invoice based on approved allocations and reduce the number of invoices rejected by the system.
- DSS Operations Managers are working on commercial provider segmentation analysis. Analysis determines a differentiated service offering for providers based on risk level and value associated with the relationship and service provision.
- Ongoing risk and analysis training with DSS Operations Managers.
- We are working on an options analysis of the movement of all contracts, claims, payments, reporting and ledger system to MSD and timeframes, resources and risks related to moving in comparison to continuing to use the health payments system and new online contract management system already established by HNZ on behalf of DSS.

### Upcoming milestones

- Contract management, relational commissioning, DSS-specific commissioning (including financial delegations) and probity training will be completed for DSS Operations staff by end of October.

## Communications and media update

Lead: Ruth Laugesen, Manager Media and Social Media, MSD

### DSS / Taskforce media

There has been a media query this week about residential care challenges for disabled people. It focuses on disabled people in hospital awaiting discharge to a residential care facility. This query is also with Health New Zealand. We will speak to your office about our response.

### Digital Update

A temporary landing page for DSS was set up at the time of the changeover on 16 September. To date there have been 2,736 views of the page.

## Taskforce weekly status update

### Programme Director comment

Lead: Al Hill, Programme Director DSS Taskforce

We achieved four milestones this week:

- We presented the joint report on the phase two transition, discussed at our meeting on 10 October 2024. Agencies are working to reach agreement on the final elements ahead of the consultation going live for staff next week.
- We presented our report on the Taskforce's policy work programme, which we will discuss with you at our officials meeting next week (Wednesday 16 October).
- The DCE interagency group met for the first time. This comprises MSD, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, MoDP, Treasury and DPMC. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce them to the Taskforce's work programme, identify and discuss shared interests and overlapping remits. The DCEs agreed to use the interagency group as a clearinghouse for policy issues as well as supporting the Taskforce's policy work programme.
- We have endorsed the MoDP NDE Budget, which will now be used for regular reporting against service lines within NASCs, EGL sites and provider budgets.

We continue to build monitoring and reporting for residential support, including the impact of the implementation of recommendation 2. NZDSN has agreed to support data collection regarding bed vacancies. This will support our understanding of capacity and utilisation in the system, as well as monitoring the steps taken to implement recommendation two.

## Workstream updates

Workstream	RAG	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Transition of DSS to MSD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysed feedback on the first phase of the transition and identified areas of improvement for phase two.</li> <li>Finalising documentation and messaging ahead of MoDP's consultation.</li> <li>Progressing IT preparation work for phase two, identifying and addressing key IT risks to ensure the transition is delivered on time with minimal disruption to the transitioned DSS staff.</li> <li>Supporting website and newsletter set up.</li> <li>Progressing ongoing information management and shared services to ensure continuity of services for clients.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 October: employee consultation begins</li> </ul>
Design of future systems and operations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting and business rules commissioned for monthly reports for NASC budgets; residential support entries, exits and vacant beds; and assurance and Review Panel processes.</li> <li>Analysis underway for NASC Budget and Allocation reassessment programme.</li> <li>Building a data plan with the policy and data workstream to support commissioning, including prioritisation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-October: regular reporting for implementation of recs 1, 2 and 3</li> </ul>
Policy and data		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy work programme paper will be delivered on 11 October 2024 and discussed at the chew session on 16 October 2024.</li> <li>Engagement strategy was discussed with you on 3 October 2024</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 October: chew session</li> <li>18 November: commence agency consultation on SOU paper</li> <li>5 December: lodge paper for SOU</li> </ul>

## Engagement update

Lead: Kat Norman, Communications and Engagement Lead, DSS Taskforce

On Friday 11 October 2024, we will publish the first weekly update. This will include a temporary email address established to receive ideas from the sector ahead of the new DSS website. A copy has been provided to your office and the public links are:

- [taskforce-update-11-october-2024-large-print.docx \(live.com\)](#)
- [taskforce-update-11-october-2024.pdf \(msd.govt.nz\)](#)

The new DSS website will go live on 25 October 2024, which will include a subscription service for ongoing updates for the community and sector respectively. We will make sure that emails will be acknowledged appropriately, such as providing support information for anyone who refers indicates that they are in crisis.

Chris Bunny has met with multiple groups this week, including NZDSN, NZ-NASCA, DPO Coalition, Mana Pasifika. Chris and Anne met with Lifelinks. NZDSN and NZ-NASCA are willing to share DSS information with their audiences; this will be helpful for us and we are grateful to build these relationships. NZDSN will share the first weekly update through their network. We will also explore how we use other peak bodies to circulate this newsletter.

## OIA requests

### Official Information Act requests

Please see the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha (MoDP) Weekly Report for current Official Information Act requests.

## Upcoming papers

### Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 11 December 2024 (TBC)	Report back on implementation of the Independent Review of DSS (TBC)	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce



## Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
11 October 2024	Policy work programme to implement the Independent Review of DSS	This report seeks your agreement to the scope, timing and engagement approach to policy work	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, Workstream Lead, DSS Taskforce
16 October 2024 (TBC)	Outline of options for funding arrangements for DSS (joint report with the Ministry of Disabled People)	This report seeks your preference on Vote arrangements for DSS funding, including the timing of any change	Al Hill, DSS Taskforce
Early November (TBC)	Advice on your options for funding arrangements for DSS and the Ministry of Disabled People (joint report with Treasury and the Ministry of Disabled People)	This report to you and the Minister of Finance provides advice on your joint authority to approve changes necessary to enable the establishment of MoDP and to transfer DSS and related functions to MSD	Al Hill, DSS Taskforce



# Fortnightly Report

**Week ending 25 October 2024**

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

**Hon Louise Upston**



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# Disability Support Services Delivery

## Recent Engagements

The DCE and Associate DCE, DSS continue to engage with a wide range of key sector stakeholders. Meetings included:

- A visit to Palmerston North to meet with Mana Whaikaha Staff and Enable NZ a provider of Equipment and Modification Services (EMS).
- An initial meeting with the National Enabling Good Lives (EGL) Leadership Group. The group provided valuable insights into their whakapapa, role and expressed a willingness to collaborate and contribute to support development of the DSS of the future and share information through their networks.
- A positive meeting with Rose Wall, Deputy Commissioner – Disability, Health and Disability Commissioner, who expressed a desire to build a stronger relationship and knowledge sharing around complaints and quality processes. Quarterly meetings have been established with HDC to support this.
- A meeting with Ministry of Disabled People Strategic Advisory Group, who expressed their desire for us to undertake greater engagement with the community.

This week we held a joint away day for the DSS Delivery Leadership Team and key Taskforce leaders to focus on our collective priorities for the next three months.

## NASCs and EGL sites overview

Lead: Rachael Burt, Group Manager, Operations and Enabling Good Lives

### NASCs

We began receiving NASCs quarterly qualitative reports on 20 October 2024. Generally, NASCs are concerned that there are increasing numbers of people requiring a residential level of care, which is placing pressure on residential budgets. To date, eight NASCs have highlighted this is an issue. We will provide a briefing to you on NASCs quarterly qualitative reports in the next fortnight.

As an immediate response we continue to support NASCs to better manage residential expenditure. We are providing guidance, based on our experience within the EGL sites, on developing alternatives to residential care and putting in place a community of practice to support NASCs to implement alternative approaches.

### EGL Sites

EGL sites continue to review funding with disabled people and whānau. This has led to some funding proposals being changed to better meet the individuals' needs and/or to ensure all proposed spending meets the purchasing rules.



Connectors continue to support people to achieve their good life plans, by finding ways to achieve outcomes that do not involve DSS funding (e.g. accessing mainstream services) and prioritising which goals/outcomes they wish to achieve first.

Package reviews are highlighting barriers that disabled people experience in accessing mainstream services. The EGL sites have started gathering information on these barriers so they can be raised with the responsible government agencies, as well as with the local regional leadership groups, to progress through their community development work.

## **Review Panel overview**

Lead: Rachel Daysh, Group Manager, Design

Between 4 September and 18 October, 33 referrals have been considered by the Review Panel for recommendation. Approximately 60 percent were endorsed, the remaining applications did not meet the criteria. We have work underway to understand progress of endorsed referrals through to residential placement.

## **Court proceedings**

Lead: Ryan Moran, Chief Legal Advisor

9(2)(h)



## **Capability uplift workstream updates**

Lead: Catherine Poutasi, Director, Commissioning

Initial reporting indicates the invoice rejection system work is having a positive impact. Lessons will inform ongoing work with the 10 providers who have the largest number of rejected invoices.

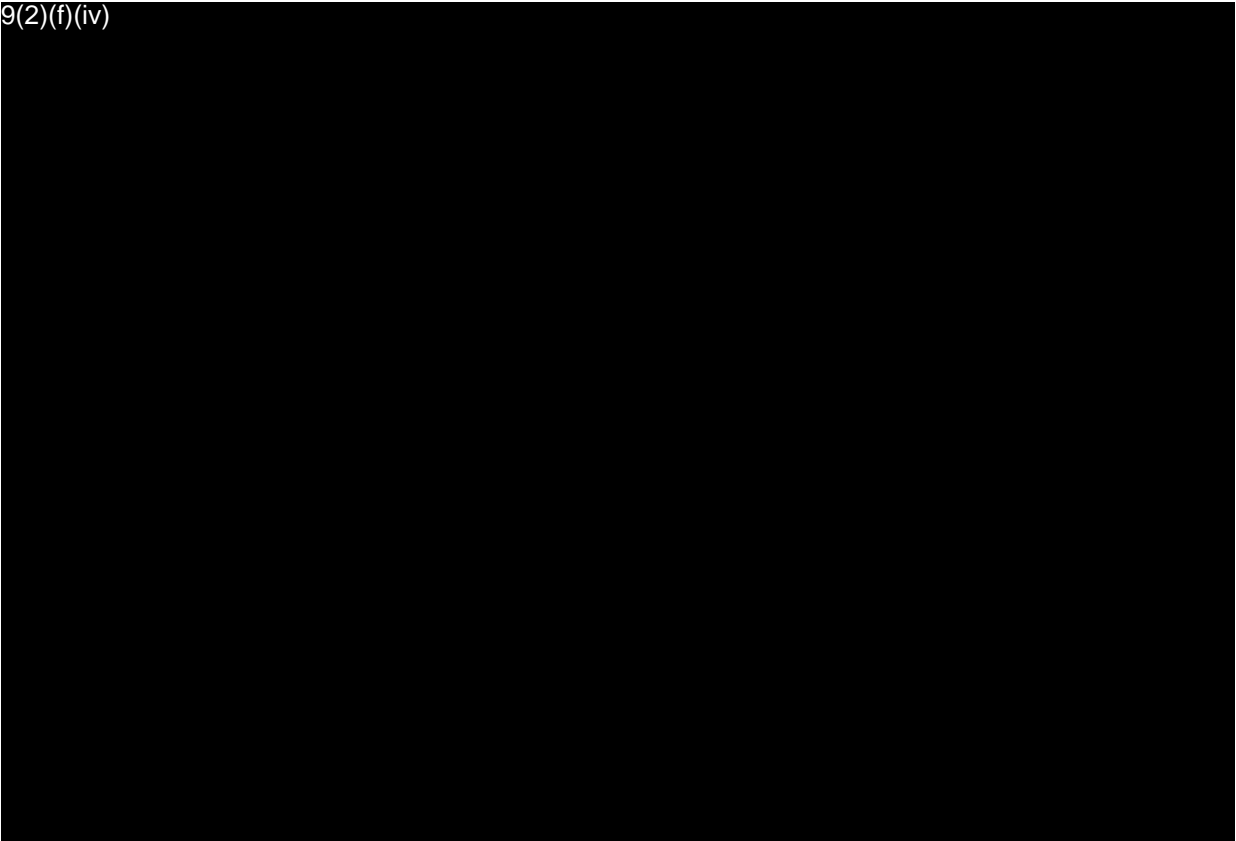
Initial Portfolio Manager commissioning training has been delivered in Auckland. Training included: commissioning for outcomes, commercial levers, accountabilities, and contract management. Ongoing risk and analysis training with DSS Operations Managers continues.

MSD has committed to Health New Zealand (HNZ) to continue to use the redesigned health payments system and the new online contract management system being established by HNZ. We are working with HNZ and the Ministry of Health to agree service specifications and to improve our data quality ahead of migration to the new system. DSS costs for the system improvements will be met by HNZ through its pre-approved funding. We will commit some of the Whaikaha in-principle expense transfer in the October Baseline Update tagged for system improvements to meet one-off costs to ledger and data improvements.

We've completed a walk-through of sampled complaints, focussed on mapping the complaints management process. Recommendations for improvement are under consideration, and we will separately brief you on next steps.

## Updates on ongoing work

9(2)(f)(iv)



### Query regarding personal budgets and KiwiSaver

Lead: Rachael Burt, Group Manager, Operations and Enabling Good Lives

You requested further information about a question from 9(2)(a) who emailed you on 5 September 2024, asking if the remaining funds from his personal budget this year could be put into his KiwiSaver fund.

Flexible funding, including funding contained in EGL personal budgets, cannot be deposited into KiwiSaver. The purpose of a personal budget is to assist the disabled person to overcome barriers related to the disability they experience, and therefore cannot be used to supplement income. Any of 9(2)(a) personal budget that is not fully utilised for the agreed purposes, is not drawn down from the Ministry.

Decisions about purchases and alignment with purchasing rules need to come from the Host. Your response appropriately referred 9(2)(a) back to Manawanui for that discussion.

### **New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Purchasing Guidelines**

Lead: Rachael Burt, Group Manager, Operations and Enabling Good Lives

DSS introduced interim purchasing guidelines in July 2024 to assist Deaf Aotearoa, the contracted provider, to prioritise access to DSS funded NZSL interpreter services, as demand exceeded the allocated budget. Some Deaf people have recently posted on social media about the changes and have reached out to Deaf Aotearoa and the NZSL board to seek support for NZSL interpretation services for activities such as access to legal services, which sit outside of the funded service.

The DSS funded NZSL interpreter service is provided to support the Deaf community to access public health and disability support services and information on equal terms with their peers. Other Government agencies and Crown Entities also fund NZSL interpreter services to enable access to their services. These can be accessed for meetings and services that fall outside of the scope of DSS funding.

We are working on a joint communication to be published on the Deaf Aotearoa and DSS website about the interim purchasing guidelines. Access to services and any unmet needs will be reviewed quarterly and inform any further updates to the guideline.

### **Communications and media update**

Lead: Ruth Laugesen, Manager Media and Social Media, MSD

In the period since October 11, there has been one media query in relation to concerns that disabled people are remaining in hospital due to difficulties in placing them into residential care. Our response highlighted it has always been challenging placing disabled people in residential care or community care following discharge from hospital. We also said that disabled people continue to be prioritised, referred to and accepted into residential care.



# Taskforce weekly status update

## Programme Director comment

Lead: Al Hill, Programme Director DSS Taskforce

Our conversation at the chew session and subsequent agreement to the timeframes for the policy work programme has given us a clear direction. We have also commenced work with EY to deliver the contract and pricing model review, as well as review and consolidation of pricing tools and support for implementation. We will update you on this work ahead of the December Cabinet report-back.

The DSS website will go live on Friday, 25 October: [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz). The online survey you have approved will go up on the website on Tuesday, 29 October and be live until Friday, 22 November. We will be publicising the survey through a variety of channels including Whaikaha social media, as well as asking peak bodies and provider organisations to share among their networks and we will update your Office on any feedback as we receive it.

We are prioritising work towards performance reporting for NASCs and using quantitative data to inform planning. We are replacing the existing quarterly reporting requirements with more regular, simpler, reporting. This will provide more quantitative data and a better understanding of how NASCs and providers are planning their inflow, managing cases, services, and allocations for disabled people. We anticipate implementing NASC-by-NASC performance reporting against budgets for October month-end. We will update you shortly on this work.

Other matters we have supported this fortnight include:

- Supporting information for the public apology following the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care
- Consultation on NZTA's Total Mobility review
- Your draft Cabinet paper regarding the UNCRPD

9(2)(f)(iv)

A number of these activities have highlighted issues for DSS in terms of potential cost-shift or interagency dependencies. We are tracking these for the longer-term work programme.

## Workstream updates

Workstream	RAG	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Transition of DSS to MSD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently in consultation regarding Phase 2 and are receiving steady</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 October: Employee consultation closes.</li> </ul>

		<p>feedback on the proposal. Consultation on transferring alternate formats funding and resource from MSD to the standalone Ministry has also begun and will run on the same implementation timeframe as Phase 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressing IT preparation work for phase 2, identifying and addressing key IT risks.</li> <li>Supporting website and newsletter set up for 25 October go-live.</li> <li>Working with Whaikaha and MSD shared service owners to define services required for Whaikaha from 1 December 2024 to ensure continuity of services and support for the standalone agency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Week starting 11 November: Final proposal released.</li> <li>1 December: Transition occurs.</li> </ul>
<b>Design of future systems and operations</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work has continued with NASCs to provide data and information and to understand their feedback on the implementation of NASC budgets.</li> <li>For recs 2, guidance on Inter-NASC transfers is being developed, which will be followed by work on inter-agency policy or process changes.</li> <li>Consolidated performance to date against NASC budgets will be considered by a DSS governance group on 29 October.</li> <li>November and December will include planning to implement pricing model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>29 October: NASC Budget Governance meeting</li> <li>November/December – plans for implementation of recommendations 4,5 and 6 developed</li> </ul>



		changes for Rec 2, and develop implementation plans for recs 4, 5 & 6.	
<b>Policy and data</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working on draft advice for December Cabinet paper (covering recs 2, 5 &amp; 6)</li> <li>Finalising engagement approach for issues consultation which commences 29 October.</li> <li>Working with MoDP on advice for preventing abuse in care which includes setting out how the current regulatory system works, for quality and safeguarding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>31 October: Draft Cabinet pack of papers provided (for discussion at officials meeting 4 November)</li> <li>4 November: Ministerial Disability Leadership Group meeting</li> <li>18 November: Ministerial and Coalition consultation on Cabinet paper</li> <li>28 November: Cabinet paper for SOU lodged</li> </ul>

## Engagement update

Lead: Kat Norman, Communications and Engagement Lead, DSS Taskforce

Milestones:

- [Second update](#) published 17 October on DSS interim site.
- [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz) website going live Friday, 25 October (as above).
- Consultation and engagement plan on Recommendations Two, Five and Six published on the new website.
- Survey link for Recommendations Five and Six to be published Tuesday 29 October and will close 22 November.
- Alternate formats under development and will be published next week.
- Survey will be shared with:
  - disabled community peak bodies
  - people who emailed [DDS\\_ideas@msd.govt.nz](mailto:DDS_ideas@msd.govt.nz) and requested being involved in consultation.
  - Whaikaha social media channels.

We have received approximately 30 emails to the ideas email address as of 23 October 2024. Most senders are requesting to be involved in engagement or asking questions about who the Taskforce has spoken to already.

## OIA requests

### Official Information Act requests

Please see the Whaikaha fortnightly report for current Official Information Act requests.

## Upcoming papers

### Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 4 December 2024	Report back on implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 2 (decisions), 5 and 6 (agree to consultation)	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce
SOU: 24 February 2025	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: final decisions on recommendation 2	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce

9(2)(f)(iv)

### Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
30 October 2024	To the Ministerial Disability Leadership Group: update on the DSS Taskforce	This will support your first meeting reestablishing the Ministerial Disability Leadership Group	Al Hill, DSS Taskforce
31 October 2024	Advice on residential pricing and respite care funding (recommendations 2 and 6)	This report responds to commissioning	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce
Late October (TBC)	Outline of options for funding arrangements for DSS (joint report with the Ministry of Disabled People)	This report seeks your preference on Vote arrangements for DSS funding, including the timing of any change	Al Hill, DSS Taskforce
Early November (TBC)	Advice on your options for funding arrangements for DSS	This report to you and the Minister of Finance provides	Al Hill, DSS Taskforce

	and the Ministry of Disabled People (joint report with Treasury and the Ministry of Disabled People)	advice on your joint authority to approve changes necessary to enable the establishment of MoDP and to transfer DSS and related functions to MSD	
Mid November (TBC)	Update on carers litigation	This report updates you on the Supreme Court appeal regarding family carers seeking employment declarations	Al Hill, DSS Taskforce





# Fortnightly Report

**Week ending 8 November 2024**

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

**Hon Louise Upston**



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# Disability Support Services Delivery

## Recent engagements

The DCE and Associate DCE, DSS continue to engage with a wide range of key sector stakeholders. Meetings in the past fortnight included:

- An introductory meeting with Samantha Lee, the new Chair of New Zealand Disability Support Network (NZDSN), who signalled commitment to work in closer partnership with DSS.
- Auckland visits with staff, NASCs and providers including Northable, Taikura, Explore, and Disability Connect. Both Northable and Taikura noted they had measures in place to manage to budget.
- Explore Director, Ray Finch, had innovative ideas on improving services to disabled people whilst also providing cost savings through an electronic verification system.
- A meeting with the EGL Waikato Leadership Group, who were keen to discuss the future direction for EGL.
- A positive visit to The Cow Shed, which is an example of the EGL approach, and offers a short break respite family-run option for disabled young people with high medical needs and/or challenging circumstances.
- Meetings with the Chief Executives of IDEA Services and Your Way Kia Roha.
- A meeting with Andrew Bridgman, the acting Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki (OT) focused on the transition of disabled youth from OT care to DSS services. Also discussed was the benefit of streamlining contracts with providers working in both areas.
- Meetings with the Older Disabled People's Group. Topics discussed included challenges in accessing services and equipment post age 65.

Contact: Chris Bunny, DCE Disability Support Services, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

## Priority workstream updates

Workstream	RAG	Status update	Upcoming milestones
<b>Transition of DSS to MSD</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation feedback has been considered and a decision document is being developed. Communication of decisions is planned for Wednesday 13 November.</li> <li>• Progressing IT preparation for staff transition to MSD.</li> <li>• First draft of the new MSD-Whaikaha shared services agreement completed and is under review by service owners and key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 November: Final proposal released.</li> <li>• 1 December: new MSD-Whaikaha shared services agreement in place</li> <li>• 1 December: Phase 2 Transition Go Live</li> </ul>
<b>Design of future systems and operations</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NASCs will report on how they are managing their budgets through a Budget Action Management Framework due 18 November.</li> <li>• Operational Policy is being developed to provide clarity on budget-related issues (Inter-NASC and inter-agency transfers and managing higher risk residential placements).</li> <li>• A performance approach is soon to be finalised and will be used to respond to varied levels of NASC performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 November: Operational policy on inter-NASC budgets management delivered to NASCs</li> <li>• 30 November: Initial performance assessment and feedback to NASCs</li> <li>• 20 December: Preliminary public monitoring and reporting metrics developed for testing.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy and data</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidation of advice on the rapid review of residential pricing.</li> <li>• Building out the discussion document on recommendations 5 and 6.</li> <li>• Continuing work with MoDP on advice for preventing abuse in care, which includes setting out how the current regulatory system works, for quality and safeguarding.</li> <li>• Four workshops with residential provider have been organised for 13-15 November.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 November: Ministerial and Coalition consultation on Cabinet paper</li> <li>• 28 November: Cabinet paper for SOU lodged</li> </ul>



Workstream	RAG	Status update	Upcoming milestones
<b>Capability uplift</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial and procurement training was delivered in Wellington.</li> <li>Programme work plan drafted and in review.</li> <li>Additional commercial support resource onboarded from existing MSD resource.</li> <li>Discrete NASC reporting and commercial analysis project has been started.</li> <li>Procurement plan outlining pipeline for next three years has been finalised.</li> <li>Review of top 10 providers (by funding) and Phase 2 of the line-by-line review have been started.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13 &amp; 22 November: Commercial &amp; Procurement training in Christchurch and Dunedin</li> <li>23 November: Work plan agreed &amp; resourced</li> <li>End November: Establish Commissioning Board to provide commercial governance over commissioning activities.</li> </ul>

## Engagement, communications and media updates

### Engagement update

We published the survey for Recommendations Five and Six on Tuesday 29 October, and published alternate formats the same day. The survey closes 22 November.

Character limits were expanded in the survey, following feedback received.

To date, there have been 621 responses to the online survey and 17 written submissions received from [DSS\\_submissions@msd.govt.nz](mailto:DSS_submissions@msd.govt.nz).

We have not received any requests to submit an audio or video submission.

### Communications and media

There have been no media queries over the past two weeks.

The Ministry of Disabled People did a Facebook post publicising the DSS survey underway on disability support services, inviting people to take part. The post has had 11,000 impressions and been shared 30 times.

Contacts: Kat Norman, Engagement Lead, DSS Taskforce, 9(2)(a) and Ruth Laugesen, Manager Media and Social Media MSD, 9(2)(a)

## Updates on ongoing work

### Safeguarding – People for Us contracts

We are negotiating and finalising contracts for the new People for Us services we have procured.

People for Us is a peer visiting service to enable disabled people (who are at high risk of abuse or neglect) living in DSS-funded community residential services to communicate if they are safe, living a good life, and experiencing high-quality support services.

These services were designed and developed in partnership with the disability community, and they form part of the DSS response to improving quality and strengthening safeguards for disabled people.

There were three successful providers following a two-stage Government Electronic Tenders Service (GETS) process which began in December 2023:

- People First, a nationwide organisation run by and for people with an intellectual disability (learning disability). We are in the final stages of negotiating this contract.
- Te Ahi Kaa Indigenous Solutions, a Māori provider providing services across the Waikato and South Auckland regions. This contract has been finalised.
- Vaka Tautua, a Pacific-led provider providing services across the greater Auckland region. We are in the final stages of negotiating this contract.

The Prime Minister's Office has included People for Us in the planned announcements for the Abuse in Care public apology on 12 November, as it aligns with Recommendation 76 of the Royal Commission's final report to provide people in care with access to an independent advocate.

Contact: Trish Davis, Group Manager, Quality and Insights, Ministry of Disabled People, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

### NASCs and EGL sites

NASC reporting for the quarter ended 30 September 2024 identified about 20 people that NASCs had assessed as being high priority requiring urgent entry into residential care. Many NASCs are referring to a lack of budget when discussing these cases.

We are taking steps to address this issue. In situations when a NASC or EGL Site determines that residential care is high priority and urgently required, but they cannot currently afford the entry within their forecasted budget, we are introducing some

limited budget tolerance. This will enable NASCs and EGL sites to facilitate placement. Where the forecasted budget is temporarily exceeded, the NASC or EGL site will need to describe the specific actions it will take to return to be within the residential budget by year-end.

Contact Rachael Burt, 9(2)(a) and Nathan Schofield, 9(2)(a)

### **DSS Performance measure from Annual Report (assessment within 20 days of referral)**

In a recent officials' meeting with Ministry of Disabled People, you requested further information about the following DSS performance measure, from the 2023-2024 Annual Report, showing the measure as being significantly under-achieved.

Measure	Standard 2023/24	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24	Status
<b>Connecting and strengthening disability communities</b>				
All new eligible DSS clients are assessed within 20 days of referral is equal to or greater than	80%	82.5%	<b>41.3%</b>	✘
The standard was not met. Upon review of Whaikaha measures, we noted an error in the calculation of this measure and have corrected this. For the purposes of this result, new clients include re-entered clients requiring assessment. The recalculated result for 2022/23 is 48%. Refer to disclosure of judgements.				

This measure has been in place since disability support services were in Ministry of Health, and then transferred to the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha. Results have previously been miscalculated, which was clarified in the statement above in the 2023/2024 annual report.

We have completed the 2024/2025 first quarter performance reporting for the quarter ending 30 September 2024. The performance reporting for this measure notes that the Q1 result is broadly consistent with previous quarters at 39%.

Recent changes following the introduction of fixed budgets mean that NASCs are working to understand budget parameters and forecasting, to prioritise entries.

We are working with NASCs to address improvements in their reporting and monitoring responsibilities, including budget management and changes in practice around reassessments to ensure that disabled people with the highest need are being prioritised.

We expect that results in future quarters will improve. It might take some time to improve to the levels of the standard set for this measure and/or ensure further clarity on its interpretation.

MSD will review this and other DSS measures over the coming year as part of our annual Estimates of Appropriations process.

Contact: Rachael Burt, 9(2)(a)

## OIA requests

### Official Information Act requests

Please see the Whaikaha report for current Official Information Act requests.



## Upcoming papers

### Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 4 December 2024	Report back on implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 2 (decisions), 5 and 6 (agree to consultation)	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce
SOU: 24 February 2025	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: final decisions on recommendation 2	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce

9(2)(a)

### Reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
13 November 2024	Advice on your options for funding arrangements for DSS and the Ministry of Disabled People (joint report with the Ministry of Disabled People)	This report to you and the Minister of Finance provides advice on your joint authority to approve changes necessary to enable the establishment of MoDP and to transfer DSS and related functions to MSD	Al Hill, DSS Taskforce
Mid November (TBC)	Update on carers litigation	This report updates you on the Supreme Court appeal regarding family carers seeking employment declarations	Al Hill, DSS Taskforce



# Fortnightly Report

**Week ending 22 November 2024**

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

**Hon Louise Upston**



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# Disability Support Services Delivery

## Recent engagements

We continue to engage with a range of key sector stakeholders. Meetings in the last fortnight included:

- An introductory meeting with Deaf Aotearoa, a nationwide organisation representing the voice of Deaf New Zealanders, who offered assistance in reaching their community.
- Meetings in Dunedin with with Pact, Dunedin Community Care Trust, and Your Way Kia Roha Otago Southland. The current 'freeze' on residential budgets was the main topic raised.
- A meeting with the Chief Executive of peak body Carers Alliance who highlighted the need to include family and carers in communications and consultation.
- A meeting with community residential provider ConneXu, which supports disabled people in the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and King Country.
- An initial meeting with independent disability advocate Jane Carrigan as she offered to share background, history, and context of DSS from her experience as an advocate.
- An introductory meeting between senior officials with the Department of Corrections.

Contact: Chris Bunny, DCE Disability Support Services, 9(2)(a)

## Priority workstream updates

Workstream	RAG	Status update	Upcoming milestones
<b>Transition of DSS to MSD</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final decision on the change process has been communicated to staff, with approximately 40 roles transferring to MSD and 69 roles transferring to MoDP as the new standalone agency. These changes are effective on 1 December.</li> <li>• We are continuing to work through implementation of Phase 2 of the change process, with the pilot transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 November:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MSD-MoDP shared services agreement provided to MSD and Whaikaha CEs for sign off.</li> <li>○ Transition of pilot users completed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 1 December:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Phase 2 Transition Go Live.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



		<p>commencing on Friday 22 November for completion by Monday 25 November.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new MSD-MoDP shared services agreement has been completed and awaiting senior exec. approval.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New MSD-MoDP shared services agreement in place.</li> <li>2 December: Mihi Whakatau for staff transitioning to MSD.</li> </ul>
<b>Design of future systems and operations</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NASCs have reported against a Budget Management Action Framework, to provide assurance on how they are managing their NASC and residential budgets.</li> <li>Governance will meet 26 November to consider their responses, alongside the latest financial performance information.</li> <li>The Operational Policy and Guidelines 2024/25 have been updated to enable Inter-NASC transfers to occur.</li> <li>NASCs will soon receive a letter that outlines DSS' expectations regarding Inter-NASC transfers, and the updated Review Panel Terms of Reference, particularly relating to how NASCs can take a budget 'risk position.'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 November: Initial performance assessment and feedback provided to NASCs.</li> <li>20 December: Preliminary public monitoring and reporting metrics developed for testing.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy and data</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministerial, Coalition and officials' consultation underway on Cabinet paper.</li> <li>Alignment with Ministry of Transport on Total Mobility Scheme consultation – timing has been aligned, but consultation will be run separately, as different interest groups (Aide-Mémoire to come)</li> <li>Final week of public consultation – meetings with peak bodies on Recommendations 5 and 6 have been completed.</li> <li>Complete workshops with residential care providers on Recommendation 2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26 November: Cabinet paper and discussion documents for SOU consideration submitted to the Minister.</li> <li>28 November: Cabinet paper and discussion document lodged with Cabinet office for SOU on 4 December.</li> <li>Late November: Aide-Mémoire on future steps for the Disability Support Bill.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued work to consolidate advice on the rapid review of residential pricing.</li> </ul>	
<b>Capability uplift</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered commercial and procurement training in Christchurch on 12 and 13 November 2024.</li> <li>Testing new commissioning project planning tool with Operations Team to improve commercial management of providers.</li> <li>Initiated recruitment of Procurement &amp; Commercial Lead.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="531 757 1098 882" style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;">9(2)(f)(iv)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing work to define roles and responsibilities across commissioning cycle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21 and 22 November: Commercial and procurement training in Dunedin.</li> <li>25 November: Work plan agreed and resourced.</li> <li>End November: Establish Commissioning Board to provide commercial governance of commissioning activities.</li> </ul>

## Engagement, communications, and media update

### Recommendation Two engagement

In the week beginning 12 November we held four workshops with residential care providers, (including aged care) to understand their views.

We asked providers questions around funding consistency and transparency, regional consistency, cost drivers, support expectations and the relationship they have with funders. We also asked them to prioritise across these areas and across the principles that the future funding approach will be based on (transparency, consistency, and client flexibility).

Some themes coming from this feedback:

- In line with EGL, there is an increased expectation of whole-of-life, responsive care, but the contracting and funding approach continues to be centred around rigid input specifications.
- Factors driving up costs were in staffing, rental, operating and compliance costs. There was also a view that people in residential care now have higher needs than they had in the past.

A summary will be shared with workshop participants and published on our website in the week beginning 16 December.

### **Recommendation Five and Six engagement**

The survey closes today for Recommendations Five and Six. There have been 1,328 responses to the online survey and 44 written submissions received from DSS\_submissions@msd.govt.nz.

We have not received any requests to submit an audio or video submission.

This week we have started coding the submission feedback. We will provide an initial summary alongside the December Cabinet paper “Policy work to improve the sustainability of Disability Support Services”.

We will continue to analyse submissions and we intend a summary of submissions will be published on the website in December.

### **Community Update**

We sent the first Community Update to subscribers on Monday 18 November and shared the update with 44 other organisations, including peak bodies, to share with their audiences. We expect subscriber numbers, currently at 282, to continue growing as the community becomes familiar with this as the channel where they will receive regular updates. The audience appears to be highly engaged, with a 75% open rate for the emails, compared to the industry standard of 40% for government emails.

### **Provider Newsletter**

We sent a Provider Newsletter to 116 subscribers on Friday 22 November, and we shared with 44 other organisations including peak bodies and asked them to share the newsletter with their networks.

Contact: Kat Norman, Engagement Lead, DSS Taskforce, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

## Communications and media

There has been renewed media interest this week from Stuff/The Press in the use of Telehealth consultations to make diagnoses of autism, and concerns from the autism community that DSS does not recognise diagnoses made in this way.

There are assertions that this is a change in policy by DSS and previously the Ministry of Disabled People. This has been driven by concerns within the autism community about affordable and easy access to diagnoses.

The media response from DSS has made it clear that we rely on the Autism Guidelines for what is best practice for clinical assessments, and that this should be an in-person assessment. A diagnosis alone does not lead to DSS funding, it also requires a needs assessment. We have put the reporter in touch with the professional body that draws up and regularly reviews the Autism Guidelines.

This week we responded to the most recent letter in a series of correspondence with Autism NZ Chief Executive Dane Dougan that also addressed this issue. Our response was consistent with the media messaging. Our response also highlighted relevant inter-agency projects to improve access to diagnostic services and emphasised the input opportunities available for those wishing to contribute to the ongoing DSS development work.

We have also had a media query from Radio New Zealand in relation to a woman whose disability support funding has been reduced substantially after her package was reassessed when she moved regions. The change in purchasing rule guidelines in March are one ingredient. We are currently establishing facts and preparing a response.

Contacts: Ruth Laugesen, Manager Media and Social Media MSD, 9(2)(a)



## Updates on ongoing work

### Annual Review Select Committee

Preparations are underway for the Ministry of Disabled People (MoDP) and Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Annual Review Select Committee hearings that will be held on Wednesday 4 December.

We are supporting MoDP's preparation and hearing with a DSS subject matter expert who can speak about DSS operations in the period ending 30 June 2024.

The MSD hearing follows immediately after the MoDP hearing that day. Debbie Power and Chris Bunny will both attend to speak about current DSS activities and work around our response to the Independent Review and the department's strategic intentions and stewardship responsibilities.

### Re-commissioning of Forensic Coordination Service for Intellectual Disability (FCS(ID))

We are about to begin an open procurement process for the re-commissioning of the Forensic Coordination Service for Intellectual Disability (FCS(ID)).

The previous contract for FCS(ID) with Health New Zealand ended on 4 March 2024. The service temporarily transferred into the Ministry of Disabled People from 5 March 2024, to strengthen and stabilise the service, with the intention of re-commissioning the service to an external provider by 1 September 2025. The team then transferred with DSS to MSD in mid-September 2024.

The FCS(ID) is a highly specialised service which provides needs assessment and service coordination for people with an intellectual disability who access the High and Complex Framework (the Framework).

The Framework provides a pathway for offenders with an intellectual disability away from the criminal justice systems towards more appropriate disability services. This service has statutory roles for administration functions under the Intellectual Disability (Compulsory Care and Rehabilitation) Act 2003 (IDCCR Act) and related legislation for people subject to these Acts.

The procurement plan was approved on 21 November. The Request for Procurement (RFP) will be distributed via the Government Electronic Tenders Service (GETS) in early December. We will notify all relevant agencies and stakeholders.

We expect the procurement process to run from December to April and will update you further as this work advances.

Contact: Terry Hibbert, Group Manager, System Design, Disability Support Services s9(2)(a)

## **Review Panel Terms of Reference**

NASCs and EGL sites were advised on 15 November that the Terms of Reference for the Review Panel have been updated to address several issues.

The most significant change is allowing NASC and EGL sites the ability to manage cases where there is a potential for a high risk of harm if a disabled person is unable to enter residential care. This means the Review Panel can consider specific high priority cases even when the NASC/EGL site cannot offer assurance there is availability within their immediate budget.

NASCs and EGL sites will need to provide assurance they are taking reasonable and practical steps to return to budget within the financial year.

Other changes to the Terms of Reference clarify which funding packages need to be referred to the Review Panel, which now includes all residential entries, and describes the quality and timeliness of evidence required by the Review Panel.

Contact: Rachel Daysh, Chief Advisor, Disability Support Services, 9(2)(a)

## **OIA requests**

### **Official Information Act requests**

Please see the Whaikaha report for current Official Information Act requests.

## Upcoming papers

### Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 4 December 2024	Report back on implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 2 (decisions), 5 and 6 (agree to consultation)	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce
SOU: 24 February 2025	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: final decisions on recommendation 2	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce
9(2)(f)(iv)		

### Reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
End November (TBC)	Update on carers litigation	This report updates you on the Supreme Court appeal regarding family carers seeking employment declarations	Megan Farrow, MSD Disability Policy
26 November 2024	Report back on implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: Cabinet paper and discussion document	This report provides you with a final draft of the Cabinet paper and discussion documents for SOU consideration.	Grace Campbell - Macdonald, DSS Taskforce



# Fortnightly Report

**Week ending 6 December 2024**

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

**Hon Louise Upston**

REP/24/12/1112



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# Disability Support Services Delivery

## Recent engagements

We continue to engage with a range of key sector stakeholders. Meetings in the last fortnight included:

- A meeting with the Cerebral Palsy Society of New Zealand. This was an initial meeting to discuss the future direction of DSS. The group was engaged, interested and optimistic about the future.
- The CEO Provider Forum, which was the first meeting held with the group since September. When the DSS changes were announced, meetings were held to brief the group about the changes. We updated the group on progress and timeframes for the ongoing implementation of the Independent Review recommendations. We agreed to continue to work together in partnership and operate a co-governance model where either party could raise items for discussion. We plan to schedule quarterly meetings to start in the new year.
- Faiva Ora leadership group, this was our first meeting with this group. They offered advice and support on how to engage effectively with the Pacific community.
- Laura Fergusson Trust Board. This was a follow-up to the postponed visit to their Lower Hutt operation. We provided an update on progress made in regard to the Independent Review recommendations and indicated what they could expect in the New Year in terms of engagement. They were very supportive of the progress and process. They are keen that the postponed visit is rescheduled.
- Waikato Enabling Good Lives (EGL) Leadership Group, who outlined some of the specific challenges faced by their community. We updated them on progress and timeframes for the ongoing implementation of the Independent Review recommendations.

Contact: Chris Bunny, DCE Disability Support Services, 9(2)(a)



## Priority workstream updates

Contact: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, 9(2)(a)

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
<b>Transition of DSS to MSD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new MSD-MoDP shared services agreement is in place.</li> <li>Phase 2 of the change process completed.</li> <li>Mihi whakatau for transitioning staff was held on Monday 2 December.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13 December: Transition of DSS to MSD workstream complete.</li> </ul>
<b>Design of future systems and operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NASCs were provided with additional reporting on their budget spend and budget phasing across the financial year.</li> <li>Letters have been sent to NASCs summarising the latest changes relating to NASC Budgets and reminding them of the expectation to receive entries or transfers from other agencies.</li> <li>Detailed implementation planning for the residential pricing model has commenced.</li> <li>Discussion paper to inform the direction of Recommendation 4 is being developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18 December: discussion paper on recommendation 4 provided to DSS Executive.</li> <li>20 December: Preliminary public monitoring and reporting metrics developed for testing.</li> <li>31 January: Initial performance assessment and feedback provided to NASCs.</li> </ul>

<b>Policy and data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet paper and consultation documents were agreed at Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee (SOU) – 4 December.</li> <li>• Work is underway with your office to prepare the announcement and proactive release of Cabinet’s decisions. This will include summary information on submissions analysis.</li> <li>• Over 1,600 survey responses and submissions were received for issues consultation. Submissions analysis continues.</li> <li>• The significant volume of submissions means that we are no longer on track to publish the final summary of submissions in 2024, as planned.</li> <li>• Additional content will be provided in January including the full submissions analysis and plan for release of that information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 December: Cabinet paper and consultation documents at Cabinet for endorsement.</li> <li>• 12 or 13 December (TBC): proactive release of Cabinet paper and associated materials – we will include additional content on the submissions analysis.</li> <li>• January 2025: A full summary of submissions will be provided to you before release.</li> </ul>
<b>Capability uplift</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed delivery of commercial and procurement training in all sites. This is a major milestone in the capability uplift of our internal workforce.</li> <li>• Formally committed to ongoing participation in the Health New Zealand (HNZ) led Health Sector Agreements and Payments (HSAaP) programme.</li> <li>• Finalised an Operational Managers cross-agency terms of reference to align work programmes and priorities between HNZ and DSS.</li> <li>• Terms of reference for DSS Commissioning Board were developed to strengthen review and scrutiny of commissioning activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 December: Briefing on Progress in Responding to Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management recommendations.</li> <li>• 18 December: NASC Performance Management Framework reporting finalised.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Released first tender for Forensic Coordination Service as part of the High &amp; Complex Framework on 2 December.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>18 December: Overarching procurement plan consideration by DSS Governance Group.</li></ul>
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## Engagement, communications and media update

Radio New Zealand ran a story on 29 November about a 32-year-old Palmerston North woman who has become disabled as a result of a brain stem infection.

Her support package is being re-assessed because she has moved region and she is no longer able to spend her budget on private physiotherapy, speech therapy and psychological services.

The media response from DSS explained that the EGL site, Mana Whaikaha, was actively working with the recipient on a new proposed care package, and no final decision had yet been made. Funding was rolling over in the meantime and support is continuing to be provided.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, 9(2)(a)

## Updates on ongoing work

### Safeguarding – People for Us contracts

In the Fortnightly Report week ending 8 November 2024, we provided an update on progress towards finalising contracts for the People for Us services we have procured. Since then, all three contracts have been signed, and the services will be fully operational by mid-2025.

The three contracted providers are:

- People First, a nationwide organisation run by and for people with learning disabilities. They have a national contract.
- Te Ahi Kaa Indigenous Solutions, a Kaupapa Māori provider that has been contracted to provide People for Us across the Waikato and South Auckland regions.
- Vaka Tautua, a Pacific organisation, operating across the Auckland region.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, 9(2)(a)

## **Update on response work to the recommendations of the Rachael Schmidt-McCleave report – complaints review IDEA Services**

The Rachael Schmidt-McCleave Report has presented an opportunity to look at our provider complaints management processes and sector relationships through a continuous improvement lens. The response work has progressed under a Joint Oversight Group (co-chaired with IDEA Services) and including independent monitors.

The group has worked collaboratively to address the 24 recommendations and are now closing this phase of the project response work, with a final meeting being held with IDEA Services on 12 December.

The group has:

- made significant progress to restore the relationship with IDEA Services and to rebuild trust and confidence with the wider disability sector
- held a targeted engagement process with stakeholders to inform revision of DSS complaints and safeguarding policies and procedures, which have now been published on our website
- developed guidance for providers and families on what ‘good’ looks like in terms of best practice for provider complaints policies, to be published before the end of the year
- supported the development of an Outcome Agreement Management Plan in partnership with IDEA Services. This includes an ongoing engagement framework and escalation process for risks, issues, and opportunities. We are rolling out this approach for other contracted service providers.

With the completion of the project, ongoing complementary work in the areas of quality, safeguarding and operational service improvement will progress in the broader context of responding to the recommendations from the Royal Commission Report into Abuse in Care.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

## **Response to question about evaluation of the demonstration site for the ‘new model’ for supporting disabled people**

### *Minister’s question*

In November you asked a question on briefing: Response to questions inquiry into the quality of care and service provision and Local Area Coordination (LAC) (REP/WHK/24/10/176). This

paper was a synthesis of evaluation findings between 2012 and 2014 demonstrating changes to disability support based on the 'new model'. You asked: 'Has this been evaluated again?'

### *Response*

Since 2012/13, the primary focus for system-level change has shifted from the 'new model' to the EGL approach. The updated EGL model, which incorporates the central features of the 'new model', has been evaluated at least twice since 2013. Whaikaha has previously provided you with a summary of the evaluations of the EGL approach (REP/WHK/24/7/119 refers). Further copies of these evaluations are available on request.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

### **Tender for Forensic Coordination Service released**

On 2 December, DSS released a tender seeking proposals for a supplier to deliver the Forensic Coordination Service for people with Intellectual Disabilities. This procurement is an open market Request for Proposal (RFP) which was released via the Government Electronic Tenders Service (GETS). A supplier briefing will be held next week, to provide any further information to potential suppliers in a transparent manner. Key dates for planned activity are:

- Deadline for Proposals 27/01/2025
- Notify Respondents of outcome 26/03/2025
- Contract start date 29/04/2025
- Service provision commences 01/09/2025

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]



## Upcoming papers

### Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 5 March 2025	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: final decisions on recommendation 2	Grace Campbell-Macdonald, DSS Taskforce
9(2)(f)(iv)		

### Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
11 December 2024	Progress on responding to Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management recommendations.	Update on progress to date towards responding to the recommendations.	Catherine Poutasi, Director Commissioning.
11 December 2024	2025 Quarter 1 Integrated Programme Plan Milestones.	Draft plan and milestones for Ministerial engagement Jan-March 2025	Alastair Hill, Programme Director

