



Fortnightly Report

Week ending 4 April 2025

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

Hon Louise Upston

REP/25/4/241



Contents

Disability Support Services Delivery	3
Recent engagements	3
Options consultation for Recommendations 5 and 6.....	3
Priority workstream updates	4
Engagements, communications and media update	6
Updates on ongoing work	6
OIA requests.....	9
Official Information Act requests.....	9
Upcoming papers.....	9
Upcoming Cabinet papers	9
Upcoming reports	9

Disability Support Services Delivery

Recent engagements

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

- A meeting of the New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Board – DSS meets with the Board as required, to better understand the needs of the Deaf community. The Board were interested in what engagement had taken place specifically with the Deaf community and what DSS services were available for Deaf people.
- A meeting of Christchurch DSS providers, a semi-regular engagement with the Canterbury providers network to update on work programmes.

Contact: Chris Bunny, DCE Disability Support Services, s9(2)(a)

Options consultation for Recommendations 5 and 6

The DSS community consultation on options for needs assessment and allocation settings, and guidelines for flexible funding, closed at 5pm on Monday 24 March. Final engagement numbers are now available. Over six weeks, we engaged with 1,825 people. We received 598 responses to our online survey, 233 submissions and ran 45 workshops, with 994 people participating. Twenty-five of the workshops were held in person in 12 centres across the country.

The Taskforce Policy Workstream is now analysing the submissions and feedback received during the community consultation period to inform our advice to you and to support your June Cabinet paper seeking final decisions to implement Recommendations 5 and 6. We have committed to sharing back with the community what we heard during the consultation.

While the submissions and feedback analysis is being carried out, DSS is also assessing the lessons we learned from the community consultation, and we are in the early stages of mapping and analysing our stakeholders for the strengthening phase of our work later this year.

Contact: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)

Priority workstream updates

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Design of future systems and operations	- Implementation planning for residential pricing model (recommendation 2): - Aide-memoire will support your announcement at Laura Fergusson Trust. - Continuing to prepare to support the disability sector after the press release, including Community Group Home provider letter of intentions, website content, and factsheet for the disability community. - Developing tools to support the operational implementation of the pricing model for NASCs. - Work continues to prepare the NASC budgets for 2025/26. NASCs will be briefed later this financial year, following Budget 2025, before the new NASC budgets commence on 1 July.	14 April – Residential pricing model: pre-Budget press release and media engagement at Laura Fergusson Trust (recommendation 2). 20 April – Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model. 21 April – High-level view of implementation implications completed (recommendations 5 and 6) to inform Cabinet paper in June. - By 13 June – NASC budget methodology for 2025/26. Methodology and new budgets will be developed, approved, and communicated. 1 July – new NASC budgets commence.
Policy and data	Community consultation on stabilising DSS ended 24 March.	9 April – Report on high level themes from consultation on assessment and allocation

	- Analysing consultation submissions, survey responses and workshop notes, and developing high-level themes report. - Developing policy advice on Recommendations 5 and 6.	settings and flexible funding, and key decisions for Cabinet paper. 2 May – Report on initial findings of community consultation and recommended options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding. 30 May – Final findings of community consultation (to be prepared for public release post-Cabinet). 4 June – Cabinet paper at SOU.
Capability uplift	- Implementing commissioning/commercial approach for residential contracts. - Prioritising procurement planning for contract category groupings approaching expiry. - Ongoing implementation of the NASC Budget Performance Management Framework. - Review of top 10 providers in progress. - Ongoing work to resolve provider invoice rejections.	April 16 – Quarterly report on progress against recommendations from Rapid Assurance Review.

Contact: Design and Policy workstreams: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)

Capability Uplift workstream: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Engagements, communications and media update

- Our Communications team will provide support for your planned visit to Laura Fergusson Trust on Monday 14 April.
- The next provider newsletter is planned for 5/16 April (date TBC).
- On Friday 21 March the community update [video](#) was circulated to a record 1,767 subscribers. The next video is planned for Thursday 17 April (TBC).
- The first staff update [DSS Connect](#) was sent to DSS staff on Friday 28 March. It is a new fortnightly email from Chris Bunny to keep staff updated and connected.
- There have been no media queries to DSS over this period.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, [s9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

Updates on ongoing work

MSD Performance Reporting

On 7 March 2025, MSD provided a summary of MSD's performance for Quarter Two of FY2024/25 to the Minister for Social Development and Employment [REP/25/3/160 refers]. We refer you, in your Disability Issues portfolio, to the following pages of Appendix 1:

Page number	Topic	Key messages for the Disability Issues portfolio
2	Areas of focus for MSD	• We introduced new processes that prioritise entry to ensure that those with the highest need can access residential care. These processes were in place while we developed a new residential pricing model. • The rate of total entries into residential care slowed.
6 – 7	Estimate performance measures where performance has improved from Quarter One	• The following appropriation categories have performance measures not meeting standard

		where performance has improved from last quarter: ○ Connecting and strengthening disability communities ○ Early intervention support services ○ Environmental support services.
16	Disability Support Services (DSS) – New Zealanders are resilient and live in inclusive and supportive communities	• The content provides an overview of DSS work during Quarter Two and planned work during Quarter Three. • You are aware of all activities.
20	Financial summary	• The content includes departmental expenditure in the 'Supporting Tāngata Whaikaha Māori and Disabled People MCA' appropriation. • Please note that this data includes Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha.

Contact: Justine Cornwall, Director DCE Office, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Stakeholder consultation on 'Exit' Policy

We will shortly begin a targeted consultation on an updated version of the 'Exceptional Circumstances when a Community Residential Support Service Provider requests the Service Exit of a Disabled Person' operational policy (the Policy).

The Policy defines a process to be followed by all parties when exceptional circumstances exist and mean a residential service provider may need to exit a disabled person from their service. For example, where there are significant health and safety risks for staff and these risks cannot be appropriately mitigated.

The Rachael Schmidt-McCleave Report in 2024 recommended a comprehensive review of the Policy to ensure it is workable for all parties.

We will invite a small group of stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Policy. These changes include an emphasis on the rights, roles, and responsibilities of all parties, including that a provider should first explore alternative options before they seek to exit a person.

s9(2)(f)(iv)



The consultation will run for four weeks, and we aim to publish the revised Policy shortly afterwards. We will update you further once the targeted consultation has concluded.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Update on the Re-commissioning of Forensic Coordination Service for Intellectual Disability (FCS(ID))

In December 2024 we updated you on the re-commissioning of the Forensic Coordination Service for Intellectual Disability (FCS(ID)) [REP/24/12/112 refers]. The project milestones have remained on track.

We received multiple responses to the RFP. The RFP evaluation panel included three external representatives and one internal DSS representative. Following two moderation sessions and supplier presentations, the panel recommended negotiating with the top-ranked respondent. On 27 March, the MSD Procurement Board endorsed the panel's evaluation report.

We are now entering negotiations with the top-ranked respondent. Our ability to meet the next milestones (a contract start date of 29 April and a transition completion date of 1 September) is dependent on successful negotiations.

We have a plan in place to support the FCS(ID) team if they need to remain in DSS past 1 September whilst negotiations conclude. In the meantime, we continue to stabilise the service and support the workforce to ensure statutory requirements are met.

We will update you further once the contract is finalised and signed by both parties.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

OIA requests

Official Information Act requests

Since the previous Fortnightly Report, you received no new requests for official information. We continue to handle an additional 21 requests for official information.

Upcoming papers

Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 4 June	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 5 and 6 (final decisions).	Alastair Hill, DSS Taskforce

Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
9 April	High-level themes from consultation on assessment and allocation settings and flexible funding and decisions for Cabinet paper.	Report presenting the high-level themes from community consultation on assessment and allocation settings and flexible funding.	Stu Murphy, DSS Taskforce
9 April	Aide Memoire to support visit to Laura Fergusson Trust, 14 April	Information to support your visit, including context about our contract with the Laura Fergusson Trust.	Paul Dickey, DSS Taskforce

		Q+A and talking points to support announcement.	
16 April	Quarterly briefing: Progress on responding to the Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management recommendations	Quarterly reporting on this progress	Catherine Poutasi, Director Commissioning
20 April	Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model	DSS' plan for implementing and communicating the new pricing model to providers	Nathan Schofield, DSS Taskforce
2 May	Initial findings of community consultation and options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding.	Report presenting the initial analysis and findings from the community consultation, and the recommended options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding.	Stu Murphy, DSS Taskforce

**Disability
Support Services**



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
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TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Fortnightly Report

Week ending 18 April 2025

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

Hon Louise Upston

REP/25/4/293



Contents

Fortnightly Report	1
Contents	2
Disability Support Services Delivery	3
Recent engagements.....	3
Priority workstream updates	4
Engagements, communications and media update	6
Updates on ongoing work	7
OIA requests	8
Official Information Act requests	8
Upcoming papers	8
Upcoming Cabinet papers.....	8
Upcoming reports	9

Disability Support Services Delivery

Recent engagements

We continue to meet with a range of key sector stakeholders. Meetings in the past fortnight have included:

- Meeting with the Chair and representative of Te Ao Marama Aotearoa (TAMA) to discuss strategic issues for Māori disabled communities and opportunities for mutual collaboration.
- Attending the launch of the Alofa Tunoa Trust (ATT), a Wellington-based support group for Pasifika families who have children diagnosed with Autism. They have committed to raising awareness and promoting acceptance for those on the spectrum.
- Attending iLead's national committee meeting to discuss opportunities to work more closely to understand the needs of young disabled people.
- A regular meeting with NASCA to discuss their work in support of NASCs and national consistency in practice.

s9(2)(i)



Priority workstream updates

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Design of future systems and operations	- Implementation planning for residential pricing model (recommendation 2): - We continue to liaise with your office regarding the rescheduling of the date for possible announcement, including a planned visit to Laura Fergusson Trust. - Preparation to support the disability sector after the press release, including Community Group Home provider letter of intentions, provider workshops, website content, and factsheet for the disability community. - Developing tools to support the operational implementation of the pricing model for NASCs. - Work continues to prepare the NASC budgets for 2025/26. NASCs will be told week of 14 April that they will receive their 2025/26 NASC budgets by the end of May, alongside education sessions. NASCs have been asking questions about how budgets will be formed and what allowances will be accounted for in their new budgets.	- Date currently being rescheduled from 14 April – Residential pricing model: pre-Budget press release and media engagement at Laura Fergusson Trust (recommendation 2). 21 April– High-level view of implementation implications completed (recommendations 5 and 6) to inform Cabinet paper in June. 30 May – NASC budget methodology for 2025/26. Methodology and new budgets will be developed, approved, and communicated. 11 June – Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model. 1 July – new NASC budgets commence.

Policy and data	- Initial analysis of consultation workshop feedback is complete, and high-level summary has been drafted. - Analysis of survey and submissions is underway. - Ongoing analysis and development of policy advice to implement recommendations 5 and 6 (on assessment and allocation, and flexible funding). - Report presenting initial policy advice on recommendation 5 and 6 is being drafted. s9(2)(f)(iv)	16 April – Report on initial policy advice on recommendations 5 and 6, and high-level themes from consultation on assessment and allocation, and flexible funding. 6 May – Report on initial findings of community consultation and recommended options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding. s9(2)(f)(iv) 30 May – Final findings of community consultation (to be prepared for public release post-Cabinet). 4 June – Cabinet paper at SOU.
Capability uplift	- Implementing commissioning/commercial approach for residential contracts. - Prioritising procurement planning for contract category groupings approaching expiry. - Ongoing implementation of the NASC Budget Performance Management Framework. - Ongoing work to resolve provider invoice rejections. - Implementing contract category management.	15 April – Quarterly report on progress against recommendations from Rapid Assurance Review.

Contact: Design and Policy workstreams: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)

Capability Uplift workstream: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Engagements, communications and media update

Communications

The next provider newsletter will be circulated to about 1,100 providers and published on the DSS website on Thursday 17 April.

We have drafted new content and branding for the MSD website (linking through to DSS) to raise the profile and visibility of the business unit and its work.

We have planned some communications to mark NZSL week, 5–11 May.

Media

Stuff approached MSD for comment on a story about a disability advocate who over the period of a week sought to charge a disabled Christchurch woman more than \$2,600 for representing her in interactions with Work and Income.

On the Work and Income side, MSD provided a response saying that beneficiary advocates are by law not permitted to charge money for those who they are advocating for.

On the Disability Support Services side, we told Stuff that the disabled woman had chosen CCS Disability Action, and their role was to help her manage her allocated funding. CCS Disability Action also provides a Service Coordinator who meets with her twice a week. We said our understanding was that the client's EGL personal budget was not used to pay the disability advocate. (A privacy waiver was provided by the disabled woman to allow us to respond to the questions on her situation).

Contact: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)

Updates on ongoing work

Report provided by Mana Whaikaha to Coroner's Court

On 3 April 2025, Mana Whaikaha provided a report to the Coroner's Court on the 'care and treatment' provided to an individual, from referral on 30 August 2023 until their death on 21 May 2024.

The report provided a comprehensive timeline, inclusive of all contacts with the individual and with others involved in their support. This information was based on our records and in compliance with Section 120 of the Coroner's Act 2006.

From August 2023 to March 2024 there was significant engagement, both directly with the individual and via efforts to coordinate the input of other professionals and agencies. The last contact on 18 March 2024 was related to connecting the individual to alternative support.

While DSS funding was available to the individual at the time of their death, they had not accessed this funding. We understand their primary focus was on seeking mental health support at the time.

The report clearly articulated the role and responsibility of Mana Whaikaha, confirming that the intention is to connect with, but not take on the responsibilities of, other agencies (including mental health, public health, ACC).

DSS will provide the Coroner with any further assistance needed to complete the inquiry.

We will update you further should DSS staff be required to present at an inquest hearing.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Exceptional Circumstances Funding

DSS is running an Exceptional Circumstances Funding process to support priority and urgent access to residential support. The process is intended to provide additional funding for residential supports in priority and urgent situations where delay presents an imminent risk and the NASCs are unable to support from within their budget.

To date, we have received 61 applications from NASCs. To ensure consistency with standard practice, applications will be assessed by the Review Panel to determine whether they are supported by good evidence.

An initial review suggests there is considerable variation in the priority and urgency of these applications. We are now creating a national list that is ranked by priority and urgency. Once the national list is finalised, DSS will determine how many additional places will be allocated.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

OIA requests

Official Information Act requests

Since the previous Fortnightly Report, you received no new requests for official information. We continue to respond to another 21 OIAs.

Upcoming papers

Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 4 June	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 5 and 6 (final decisions).	Alastair Hill, DSS Taskforce
s9(2)(f)(iv)		

Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
15 April	Quarterly briefing: Progress on responding to the Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management recommendations	Quarterly reporting on this progress	Catherine Poutasi, Director Commissioning
16 April	Initial policy advice on recommendations 5 and 6, and high-level themes from consultation.	Report presenting the initial policy advice on recommendations 5 and 6, and high-level themes from consultation on assessment and allocation, and flexible funding.	Stu Murphy, DSS Taskforce
6 May	Initial findings of community consultation and options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding.	Report presenting the initial analysis and findings from the community consultation, and the recommended options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding.	Stu Murphy, DSS Taskforce
11 June	Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model	DSS' plan for implementing and communicating the new pricing model to providers.	Nathan Schofield, DSS Taskforce

**Disability
Support Services**



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
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Fortnightly Report

Week ending 2 May 2025

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

Hon Louise Upston

REP/25/4/317



Contents

Fortnightly Report.....1

 Contents..... 2

 Disability Support Services Delivery 3

 Recent engagements..... 3

 Priority workstream updates 4

 Engagements, communications and media update 7

 Updates on ongoing work 7

 OIA requests 9

 Official Information Act requests 9

 Upcoming papers 10

 Upcoming Cabinet papers..... 10

 Upcoming reports 11

Disability Support Services Delivery

Recent engagements

We continue to meet regularly with a range of key sector stakeholders.

On Tuesday 29 April we held the inaugural 'meet and greet' online meeting of our National Quality Leaders' Group (NQLG). The NQLG brings together senior quality leaders from across the disability support provider sector to work collaboratively with DSS, to enhance communication, understanding and sharing of quality issues, challenges and opportunities.

They will help inform system-wide service quality and safeguarding improvements that respond to the needs of the disabled people we support. We see this group as a key quality operational and strategic engagement network, as we continue to build trust and confidence between ourselves as funder and our providers, with a commitment to supporting continuous improvement. We plan to host an in-person event for the NQLG in late May/early June.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Priority workstream updates

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Design of future systems and operations	• Implementation planning for residential pricing model (recommendation 2) – we continue to liaise with your office regarding rescheduling the date for possible announcement, including a planned visit to Laura Fergusson Trust. • We have begun work to investigate, and design, tools to support consistent allocation of packages, linked to assessment and need, for flexible funding and residential support. • Work continues to prepare the NASC budgets for 2025/26. ○ NASCs were told on 17 April that they will receive their budgets and education sessions by the end of May. ○ Work continues to finalise the methodology to calculate the NASC budgets, which will be applied after Budget 25 is confirmed. ○ Budgets for 2025/26 will likely have a similar methodology as they did for the current financial year (mostly based on previous spending adjusted for updated 2025/26 DSS funding), with more substantial methodology changes (accounting for things like population change) scheduled for the strengthening phase of the DSS work programme.	• Date currently being rescheduled from 14 April – residential pricing model: pre-Budget press release and media engagement at Laura Fergusson Trust (recommendation 2). • 30 May – NASC budget methodology for 2025/26. Methodology and new budgets will be developed, approved, and communicated. • 11 June – Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model. • 1 July – new NASC budgets commence.

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Policy and data	- Interim report from survey and written submissions has been received from our research partner. - Drafting of full consultation report is underway. - Report to Minister on high-level consultation workshops and initial policy advice completed. - Ongoing analysis and development of policy advice to implement recommendations 5 and 6 (on assessment and allocation, and flexible funding), including engaging with Treasury. - Commencing drafting Cabinet paper on recommendations 5 and 6.	Week beginning 5 May – Report on recommended options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding.
	s9(2)(f)(iv)	
	- Papers will be provided to you this week in support of discussion at the next Ministerial Disability Leadership Group meeting on 12 May: - Disability sector map and mainstream interfaces - Proposed early intervention initiatives for exploration.	30 May – Final findings of community consultation (to be prepared for public release post-Cabinet). 4 June – Cabinet paper at SOU.

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Capability uplift	- Implementing commissioning/commercial approach for residential contracts to ensure placement of new contracts from 1 December under a new commercial model. - Ongoing implementation of the NASC Budget Performance Management Framework. - Updates to the DSS standard terms and conditions of contract underway, to ensure improvements in contractual controls are embedded as new contracts are placed. - Contract category planning initiated to address the range of options available around upcoming contract expiries, including the most effective way to establish and manage agreements. - Ongoing work to resolve provider invoice rejections.	Notable contract dates: 30 June – NASC agreements expire, variation planning in progress. 31 August – Residential ARC agreements expire, procurement planning underway. 30 September – Community Day Services contracts expiring. 31 October – Supported Living, and Home and Community Support Services contracts expiring. 30 November – Residential CGH contracts expire. - Mid July – Quarterly report on progress against recommendations from Rapid Assurance Review.

Contact: Design and Policy workstreams: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)

Capability Uplift workstream: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Engagements, communications and media update

Communications

We have prepared communications to support the residential care pricing model announcement (TBC). This includes factsheets for the community (with alternate formats commissioned), draft PR and Q & A. We are also in touch with your office regarding possible alternative Ministerial announcements should the pricing model announcement be delayed to Budget Day.

The DSS provider newsletter was circulated to about 1,100 providers and published on our website on Thursday 17 April.

We are preparing comms ahead of NASCs and EGL sites receiving their 2025/26 budgets in late May, including a factsheet on methodology used, and information sessions with NASCs.

We are reviewing the DSS website to ensure it is up to date and clear for users.

Media

There have been no media queries received by DSS over this period.

Contact: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Updates on ongoing work

Critical incidents quarterly reporting January–March 2025

We have attached the critical incidents quarterly report for the January–March 2025 quarter as an annex to this Fortnightly Report. The table below outlines the data ‘at a glance’ for this quarter in comparison to previous quarters.

Table 1 – Total critical incidents - Q1C2024, Q4C2024, Q1C2025

Total critical incidents	Q1 C2024 Jan–Mar	Q4C2024 Oct–Dec	Q1 C2025 Jan–Mar	Q1 C2025 compared to Q4 C2024	Quarter on quarter comparison: Q1C2025 compared to Q1C2024
	663	876	795	Decrease of 9%	Increase of 20%

The attached report outlines the analysis of the reporting, including observations about the variances in reported critical incidents over time and the reasons for these.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Escalating outstanding provider invoices

In response to REP/25/3/189 – Progress on responding to Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management, you asked about what escalation options there are with providers and rejected invoices.

Part of our ongoing work to resolve invoice rejections includes working through which providers are engaging and implementing changes.

We are working with our largest providers and checking that those providers are adhering to the changes in process. Many providers are engaging with us and using the changes in process which avoid invoice rejection happening.

For providers who are not engaging with us, we are raising this matter with senior management within these organisations. In cases where we do not see progress after the initial escalation, the Associate DCE will write to the Chief Executives of those providers to escalate the matter further.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Paid family carers Supreme Court hearing

The Fleming and Humphreys Supreme Court Appeal concerning paid family carers is being held on 29 and 30 April. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is being represented by Simpson Grierson with support from Crown Law. MSD legal representatives are attending both days of the hearing.

In 2021, the Employment Court found that Ms Fleming and Mr Humphreys were employees of the Ministry of Health (noting relevant services transferred to Ministry of Disabled People (MoDP) in July 2022 and to MSD DSS in September 2024). This was on the basis that they could not be employed by their children, as their children did not have the capacity to enter into an employment agreement and thus engage their parents as homeworkers under section 5 of the Employment Relations Act 2000. Instead, the Judge decided that MoDP had engaged the family carers to work for the MoDP providing care for their respective disabled children.

MoDP appealed the decision to the Court of Appeal, which decided that under the current Disability Support Services framework, there was no employment relationship between the family carers and MoDP.

The Court found there had been an employment relationship between the Ministry of Health and Mr Humphreys for a brief period under the Funded Family Care scheme which was disestablished in 2020.

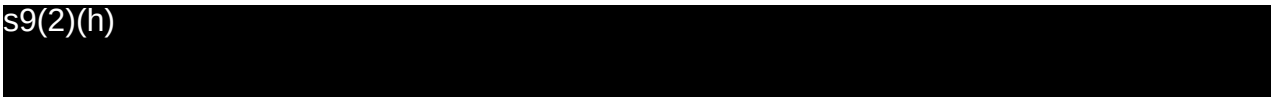
The Human Rights Commission and an Auckland based-law firm Aotearoa Disability Law have been given leave by the Court to act as interveners, which means they are allowed to provide submissions on the issues before the Court.

At this hearing, the Supreme Court will consider whether the Court of Appeal's determinations in this case were correct.

There has been media interest from NZME in this hearing, and the Supreme Court has issued a media release to assist in understanding the case and the issues it will hear. NZME ran a report on the first day of the hearing on 29 May. We are working with our communications and media teams to ensure we are equipped to respond if there is further media interest.

The Supreme Court will likely take several months to deliver its judgement in this case.

s9(2)(h)



Contact: Justine Cornwall, Director DCE Office, DSS, s9(2)(a)

OIA requests

Official Information Act requests

Since the previous Fortnightly Report, you received no new requests for official information. We continue to handle an additional 23 requests for official information.

Upcoming papers

Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 4 June	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 5 and 6 (final decisions).	Alastair Hill, DSS Taskforce
s9(2)(f)(iv)		

Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
Week beginning 5 May	Report on recommended options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding	Report seeking decisions on the recommended options for assessment and allocation and flexible funding, including analysis of consultation findings.	Stu Murphy, DSS Taskforce
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
11 June	Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model	DSS' plan for implementing and communicating the new pricing model to providers.	Nathan Schofield, DSS Taskforce

**Disability
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**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
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Fortnightly Report

Week ending 16 May 2025

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

Hon Louise Upston

REP/25/5/364



Contents

Fortnightly Report.....1

 Contents..... 2

 Disability Support Services Delivery 3

 Recent engagements..... 3

 Priority workstream updates 4

 Engagement, communications and media update 7

 Updates on ongoing work 7

 OIA requests 9

 Official Information Act requests 9

 Upcoming papers 10

 Upcoming Cabinet papers..... 10

 Upcoming reports 11

Disability Support Services Delivery

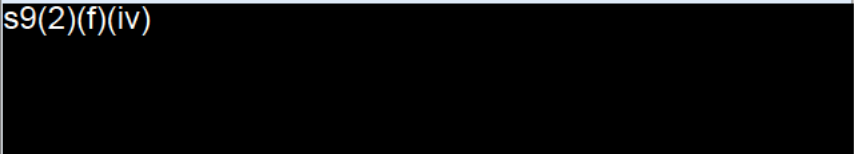
Recent engagements

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

- Disability Policy DCEs, chaired by DSS, met to discuss matters ahead of the (rescheduled) Ministerial Disability Leadership Group meeting. The group contributed to the proposals in the early-intervention paper about which you are now meeting with the Minister for Children, Hon Chhour, on Thursday 15 May.

Priority workstream updates

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Design of future systems and operations	• Implementation planning for residential pricing model (recommendation 2) – finalising communications on the details of the model alongside the process for Community Group Home providers to apply for a panel for future contracts. • After Budget Day, NASC budgets will be finalised, and NASCs will receive their budget figures and training before the end of May. • In parallel with the development of the Cabinet paper for recommendations 5 and 6, work has begun to plan the detailed implementation approach.	• 22 May – Residential pricing model: Budget press release and supporting communications to providers and NASCs. • 30 May – NASC budget methodology for 2025/26. Methodology and new budgets will be developed, approved, and communicated. • 11 June – Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model. • 1 July – new NASC budgets commence.

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Policy and data	- Draft Cabinet paper and covering report for recommendations 5 and 6 was delivered 8 May. - Draft Cabinet paper circulated for official's consultation on 9 May. - Work on the community consultation report continues. Interim report from the survey and written submissions has been completed.	- Officials' consultation on recommendations 5 and 6 cabinet paper will run 9–20 May. - Ministerial consultation will run 12–26 May.
		s9(2)(f)(iv)  30 May – Final findings of community consultation (to be prepared for public release post-Cabinet). 4 June – Cabinet paper at SOU.

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Capability uplift	- Implementing commissioning/commercial approach for residential contracts to ensure placement of new contracts from 1 December under a new commercial model. - Ongoing implementation of NASC Budget Performance Management Framework. Planning is underway for extensions of NASC contracts. - Progressive development of DSS Standard Terms and Conditions, to ensure improvements in contractual controls are embedded as new contracts are negotiated. - Progressing contract category planning to address the range of options available around contracted disability support services. - Ongoing work to resolve provider invoice rejections.	Notable contract expiry dates: 30 June – NASC agreements expire, variation planning in progress. 31 August – Residential ARC agreements expire, procurement planning underway. 30 September – Community Day Services contracts expiring. 31 October – Supported Living, and Home and Community Support Services contracts expiring. 30 November – Residential Community Group Homes contracts expire. - Mid-July – Quarterly report on progress against recommendations from Rapid Assurance Review.

Contact: Design and Policy workstreams: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)
 Capability Uplift workstream: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Engagement, communications and media update

Communications

The next monthly Provider Newsletter will be published on the DSS website and emailed to more than 1,000 subscribers on Thursday 15 May.

In the past seven days the DSS website had more than 5,000 unique users, up from 3,866 a week earlier. The top pages were:

- How to access Carer Support
- Individualised Funding
- Needs Assessment Services.

We are preparing communications about:

- NASC & EGL Budgets
- Residential Care Pricing Model
- Provider Quality Forums
- Flexible Funding and Assessment and Allocation upcoming announcements
- Finance Procurement Information Management (FPIM) invoicing code changes for providers.

Media

We responded to one media query from Consumer NZ about when updated guides on the updated hearing aid subsidy scheme would be published on the DSS website. We let Consumer NZ know that updated guides had been published last week, including in accessible HTML format, and that other accessible versions were being worked through.

The Ministry of Health had a media query from TVNZ on ME/chronic fatigue and why it was not classified as a disability. They asked whether it could be transferred to DSS. We confirmed it was a health matter.

Contact: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)

Updates on ongoing work

Update on procurement of Disability Abuse Prevention and Response (DAPAR) service

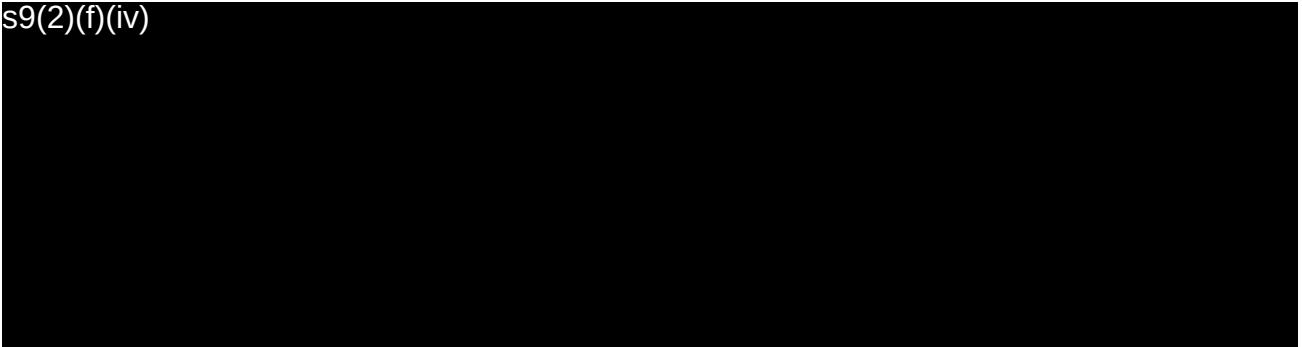
The open procurement process for the DAPAR service is coming to an end, with final sign off by the MSD Procurement Board expected on 15 May. We have followed a robust procurement process.

The Evaluation Panel had representation from six disabled people (voting members), supported by two subject matter experts (non-voting). This provided a strong community voice and diverse perspectives for this complex service.

We received 12 tender responses, including one from the incumbent provider. These were shortlisted down to three suppliers assessed as having the right mix of skills and competency.

Following several moderation sessions and supplier presentations, the panel recommended that we should negotiate with the three shortlisted suppliers, resulting in the best outcome for disabled people.

s9(2)(f)(iv)



Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) organisations and Enabling Good Lives (EGL) sites

DSS is preparing to release budgets for NASCs and EGL sites in late May, following the Budget announcement of additional funding. DSS is also updating the Operational Policy and Guidance for NASCs and EGL sites, and the role of the Review Panel, to reflect the significant changes that have occurred over the past year.

NASCs are now able to move people into residential care who have a high priority for, and urgently require, that type of support. This is being paid for using the time-limited exceptional circumstances funding that DSS has recently made available.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Update on Exceptional Circumstances funding

Further to the update we provided you in mid-April, DSS provided NASCs an opportunity to submit funding applications for one-off Exceptional Circumstances funding of their most urgent and critical cases.

We provided NASCs with guidance to assist them to identify who met the criteria for this cohort. Overall, we received 60 applications. Two of these applications were later withdrawn by NASCs. We divided these into two tranches based on whether or not

they could progress to the Review Panel for consideration without additional information.

Following a triage and moderating process, 27 applications (Tranche 1) were able to progress immediately to the Review Panel to be considered for endorsement. Of these, 24 were endorsed. The remaining three have been referred back to NASCs for additional information.

The remaining 31 applications (Tranche 2) required additional information from the NASCs to ensure they meet the criteria and terms of reference before the Review Panel could consider them. Four of these have now been considered by the Review Panel; two were endorsed and two were referred back to NASCs for further information. We expect to consider the remainder of Tranche 2 applications in the next two weeks.

As of 11 May, the Review Panel had completed evaluating all of Tranche 1.

We anticipate that ultimately most applications will be endorsed and within the available budget.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

OIA requests

Official Information Act requests

Since the previous Fortnightly Report, you received no new requests for official information. We also continue to handle an additional 20 requests for official information.

Upcoming papers

Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 4 June	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 5 and 6 (final decisions).	Alastair Hill, DSS Taskforce
s9(2)(f)(iv)		

Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
May	Equipment Modification Services – rebates	Report about EMS rebates and opportunities for improving transparency of rebates	Sarah Payne, Regional Manager Central
11 June	Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model.	DSS' plan for implementing and communicating the new pricing model to providers.	Nathan Schofield, DSS Taskforce
Mid-July	Quarterly briefing: Progress on responding to the Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management recommendations	Quarterly reporting on this progress	Catherine Poutasi, Director Commissioning

**Disability
Support Services**



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Fortnightly Report

Week ending 30 May 2025

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

Hon Louise Upston

REP/25/5/406



Contents

Fortnightly Report..... 1

 Contents..... 2

 Disability Support Services Delivery 3

 Recent engagements..... 3

 Priority workstream updates 4

 Engagements, communications and media update 7

 Updates on ongoing work 8

 OIA requests 11

 Official Information Act requests 11

 Upcoming papers 12

 Upcoming Cabinet papers..... 12

 Upcoming reports 13

Disability Support Services Delivery

Recent engagements

We continue to meet with a range of key sector stakeholders. Meetings in the past fortnight have included:

- A presentation to the NZ Federation of Disability Information Centres, to talk about work DSS has been doing to stabilise and strengthen the disability support system.
- A meeting with the Chief Executive of The Supported Life Style Hauraki Trust, a residential care provider in Thames. The Chief Executive is also the Chair of New Zealand Disability Support Network (NZDSN).
- Visits in Waikato with:
 - Disability Support Link, a NASC based in Hamilton
 - Community Living Trust, an organisation which provides specialised support for children and young people with intellectual disabilities.
- A visit to Shore Junction in Auckland, to see a house run by disability youth-focused organisation I.Lead.
- Our second meeting of the year with the CEO Provider Forum, where Budget 2025 announcements were a key focus, as well as a discussion about the Forum's areas of focus going forward.
- The first DSS online provider quality forum, run by the DSS Quality team – we have provided more information about this in the Updates on ongoing work section of this Fortnightly Report.

We are also working with I.Lead to support their upcoming Conference 2025 in Wellington. We have offered several people through the day to support table conversations, as well as contributing topics for discussion in support of our own work programme. The conference will be held over two days – 17–18 June at Te Papa.

Priority workstream updates

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Design of future systems and operations	Residential Pricing: - Community Group Home providers were provided a contractual notice of intent, including details about the pricing model on Budget Day. - Key providers were also called to give them a heads up about the changes. - DSS staff are being trained to upskill them on the pricing model and how it will be implemented. - Providers will soon receive another letter (by 2 June), detailing the implications of the pricing model for them specifically. - Aged Residential Care (ARC) providers supporting younger disabled people have also been sent a letter about contract intentions, noting that specific details about how pricing will be increased are to be confirmed. NASC Budgets: - NASCs have received letters on Friday 23 May detailing their 2025/26 NASC budget.	- From 26 May – running sessions for NASCs on budget methodology for 2025/26. 11 June – Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model. 1 July – new NASC budgets commence.

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
	- NASCs will have an information session on Monday 26 May to walk them through how NASC budgets were calculated and what is expected going forward. Recommendations 5 & 6: - Programme Planning for implementation has begun, to support implementation as soon as Cabinet has agreed direction.	
Policy & Data	- Draft Cabinet paper revised following Ministerial and Agency consultation was delivered on 23 May. - Aide-mémoire and talking points to support the Minister to present the Cabinet paper to SOU are being drafted. - Work progresses on the community consultation report, focusing on incorporating written and survey submissions into the draft report.	Stabilising 19 June – Cabinet paper to be lodged for SOU 25 June – Cabinet paper at SOU. - July – Final findings of community consultation (to be prepared for public release post-Cabinet). s9(2)(f)(iv)

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Capability uplift	- Ongoing implementation of NASC Budget Performance Management Framework continues. Extensions of NASC contracts are underway. - Progressing contract category planning to address the range of options available for contracted disability support services, including the most effective way to establish and manage agreements. - Ongoing work to resolve provider invoice rejections. - Progressive development of DSS Standard Terms and Conditions, to ensure improvements in contractual controls are embedded as new contracts are negotiated.	- Mid-July – Quarterly report on progress against recommendations from Rapid Assurance Review. Notable contract expiry dates: 30 June – NASC agreements expire, variation planning in progress. 31 August – Residential ARC agreements expire, procurement planning underway. 30 September – Community Day Services contracts expiring. 31 October – Supported Living, and Home and Community Support Services contracts expiring. 30 November – Residential Community Group Homes contracts expire.

Contact: Future Design and Policy workstreams: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)
 Capability Uplift workstream: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Engagements, communications and media update

Communications

We published the DSS monthly provider newsletter on the DSS website on 15 May. The newsletter was distributed to 1,065 subscribers. The next newsletter will go out on Thursday 19 June (TBC).

In the past seven days we have had 4,411 unique users on the DSS website, up slightly on 4,309 the week before.

The top pages continue to be Needs Assessment Services, Individualised Funding, How to Access Carer Support and Understanding the Purchasing Guidelines.

The Budget 2025 pages have had relatively low uptake. However, we contacted NASCs and providers directly through letters, as well as making phone calls to impacted residential providers and peak bodies on Budget Day and the day following.

The next Community Update video will focus on what Budget 2025 means for DSS users, along with our work in response to Independent Review recommendation 2 and a wrap of community consultation and next steps. It is due to go to more than 1,800 subscribers and on the website this week.

Media

There was one media query over this period, from a student journalist who wanted comment on what disabled community advocates were hoping to see addressed in the upcoming Budget. We called the journalist to suggest the questions were better answered by disability advocates. After the Budget, we followed up and provided the student with information on the outcome of the Budget, via a link to the Minister's media statement on disability support funding.

Contact: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)

Updates on ongoing work

DSS Provider quality forum

On Tuesday 20 May, more than 148 people attended the first online provider quality forum run by the DSS Quality Team. This first forum was co-hosted by DSS and Te Tāhū Hauora – Health Quality & Safety Commission (Te Tāhū Hauora). The session focused on contracted providers' legislative and contractual obligations to report incidents of harm to both Te Tāhū Hauora and to DSS.

We also talked about the alignment of the [DSS critical incident reporting](#) process to the Te Tāhū Hauora [National healing, learning and improving from harm \(adverse\) event](#) policy. Our key objectives are to improve consistency, streamline processes for reporting, and facilitate learning opportunities for providers.

Provider quality forums will be held approximately every two months, to improve our direct engagement with DSS funded disability support service providers on a range of different quality related topics. We will plan a forward timetable of events. Information about the forums including recordings, and copies of the presentations given at previous forums is available on the [DSS website](#).

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Court educational session on intellectual disability pathways in the criminal justice system

The Ministry of Health (MoH) and DSS are working with the Office of the Chief Justice on an educational session for the Senior Court Bench on 6 June. This involves a panel with Dr John Crawshaw, Director of Mental Health and Addiction and Rachel Daysh and Dr Duncan Thomson from Disability Support Services, Ministry of Social Development, regarding the criminal justice system and people with an intellectual disability.

Background to this session

A cross-agency Chief Executive group was established to discuss system improvements for mentally impaired persons with intellectual disability involved in the criminal justice system. This group involves senior leaders from the Department of Corrections, Health New Zealand, New Zealand Police, Oranga Tamariki, and the Ministries of Disabled People, Health, DSS and Justice. The group aim to identify ways to improve processes and treatment for mentally impaired persons and establish ways of building knowledge and skills in the sectors.

The legislation involved is the Criminal Procedure (Mentally Impaired Persons) Act 2003 (CP (MIP) Act) and the Intellectual Disability (Compulsory Care and Rehabilitation) Act 2003 (the IDCCR Act). These are companion Acts that together

allow for the disposition of those with intellectual disabilities who have criminally offended to be cared for in specialised facilities that better meet their needs rather than prison.

Comment

The Chief Justice has specifically requested an educational session be given to the Senior Court Bench in addition to sessions planned for other staff involved in the court process (eg, Crown Prosecution teams, Public Defence Service, Forensic Court Liaison Nurses) to ensure that they are up to date with relevant case law and clinical practices. A training package has been developed by MoH and DSS.

A lack of knowledge of intellectual disability, the CP (MIP) Act, and the IDCCR Act can have a significant impact on an individual's life, particularly if it leads to a missed opportunity for someone with a mental impairment to be diverted from custodial remand into a setting with supports that more effectively meet their needs and provide better chances at rehabilitation.

It is expected that that the training package will lead to fewer cases of people with significant suspected or diagnosed intellectual disability being remanded in prison through improved knowledge and understanding of the criminal justice pathways for this group. It will also support the system to operate as it was originally designed, by clearing any misunderstandings held by those involved in the court process.

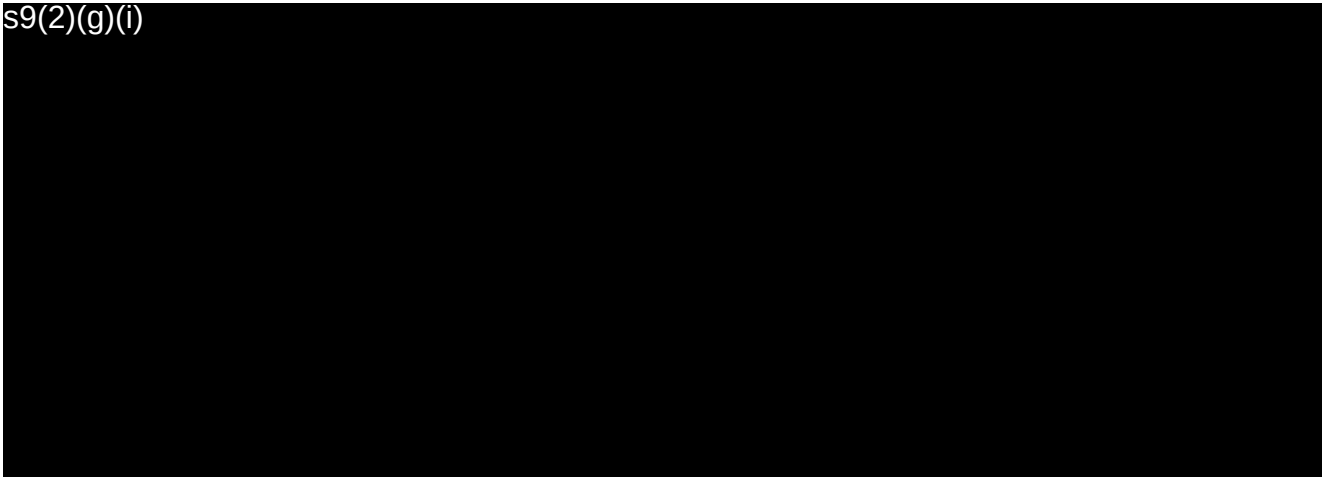
Next steps

Following the initial session with the Senior Court Bench, others will be scheduled across the country. The presentation will be tailored to suit the audience and adapted based on any feedback or questions from the participants.

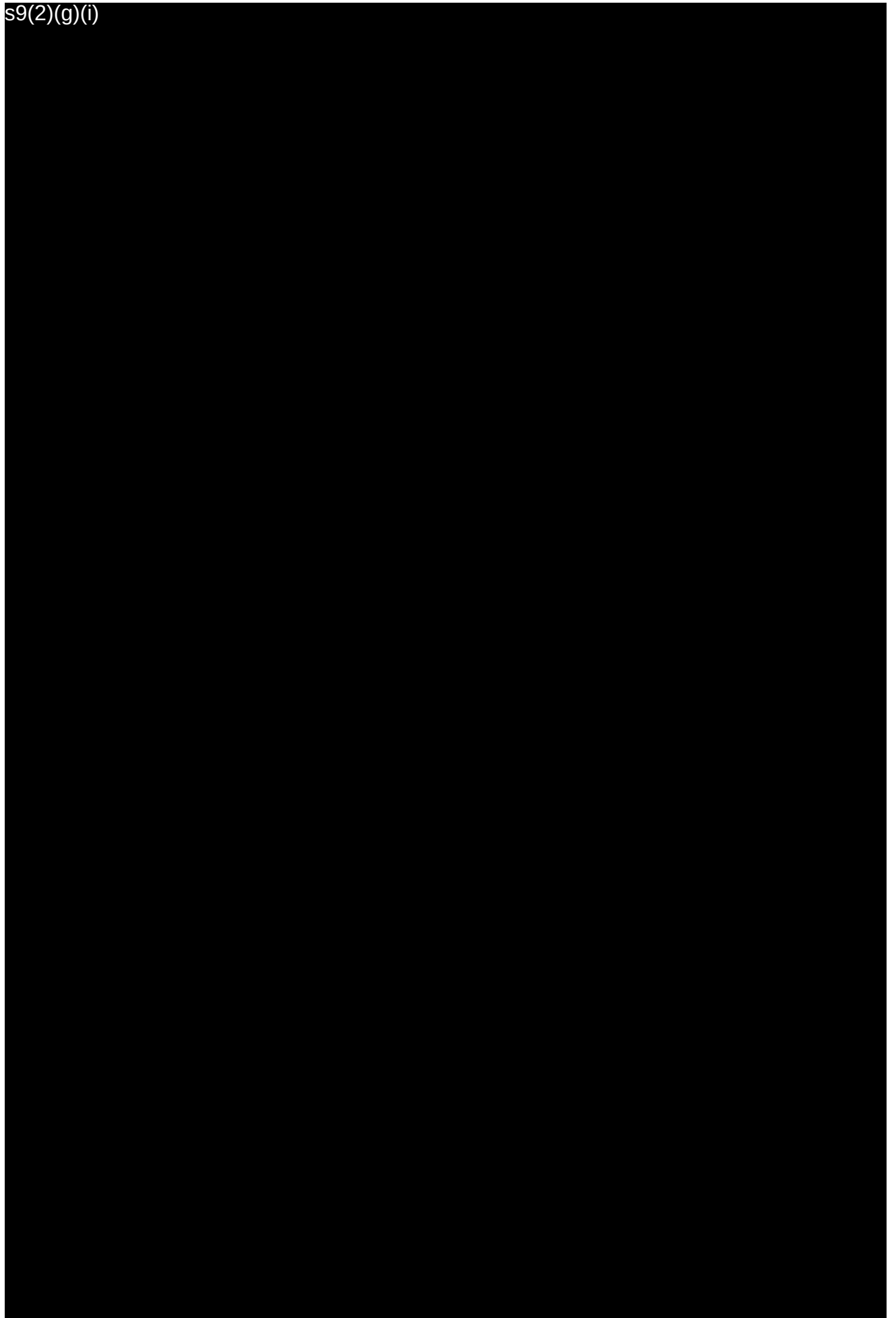
The Chief Justice has been talking with the Minister of Justice, Hon Paul Goldsmith, about potential legislative changes to the CP (MIP) Act due to legal challenges and process issues. Hon Goldsmith has made a referral to the Law Commission to consider this work.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

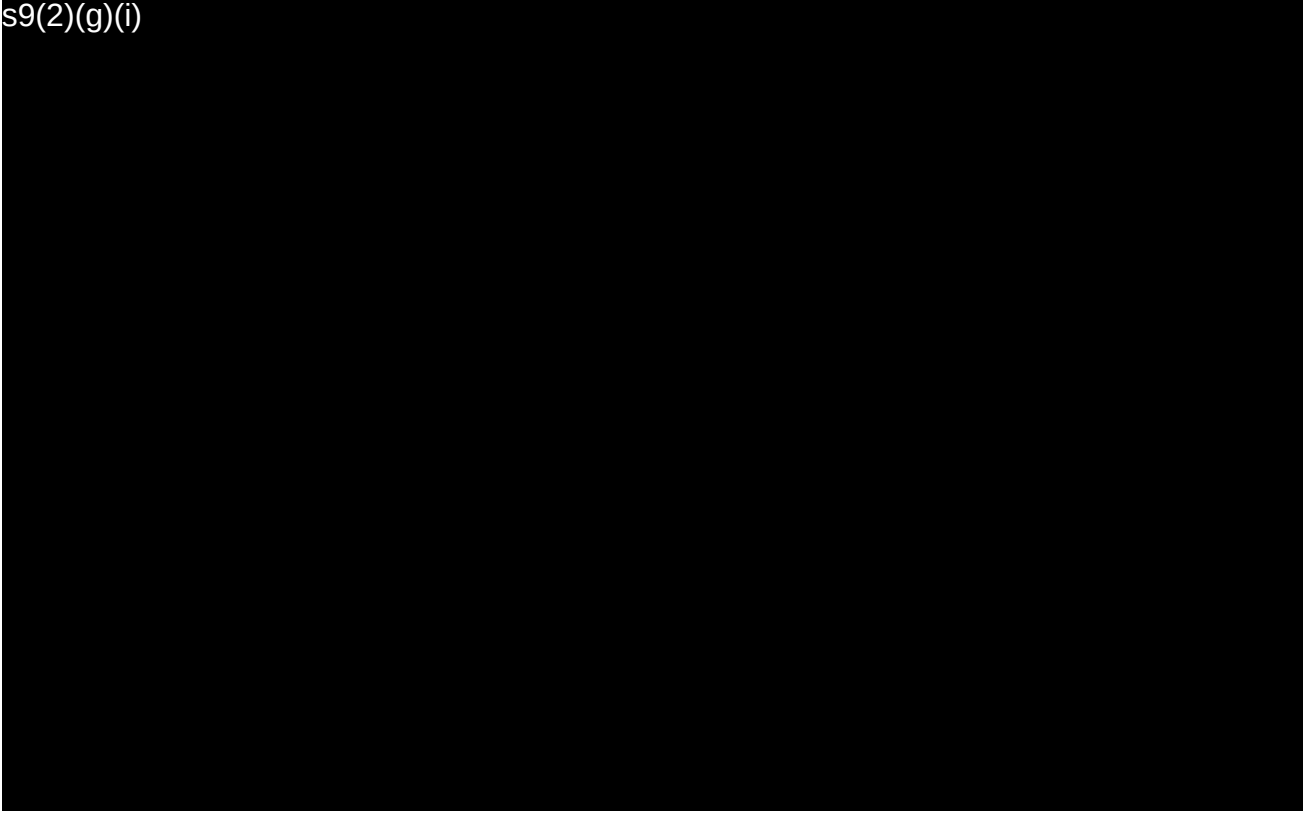
s9(2)(g)(i)



s9(2)(g)(i)



s9(2)(g)(i)



OIA requests

Official Information Act requests

Since the previous Fortnightly Report, you received no new requests for official information. We continue to handle an additional 20 requests for official information.

Upcoming papers

Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 25 June	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 5 and 6 (final decisions).	Alastair Hill, DSS Taskforce
s9(2)(f)(iv)		

Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
May	Equipment Modification Services – rebates	Report about EMS rebates and opportunities for improving transparency of rebates	Sarah Payne, Regional Manager Central
11 June	Ministerial report back on the implementation plan for the Residential Pricing Model.	DSS' plan for implementing and communicating the new pricing model to providers.	Nathan Schofield, DSS Taskforce
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
Mid-July	Quarterly briefing: Progress on responding to the Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management recommendations	Quarterly reporting on this progress	Catherine Poutasi, Director Commissioning

**Disability
Support Services**



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Fortnightly Report

Week ending 13 June 2025

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

Hon Louise Upston

REP/25/6/441



Contents

Fortnightly Report.....1

 Contents..... 2

 Disability Support Services Delivery 3

 Recent engagements..... 3

 Priority workstream updates 4

 Engagements, communications and media update 7

 Updates on ongoing work 7

 OIA requests 9

 Official Information Act requests 9

 Upcoming papers 9

 Upcoming Cabinet papers..... 9

 Upcoming reports 10

Disability Support Services Delivery

Recent engagements

We continue to meet with a range of key sector stakeholders. Meetings in the past fortnight have included:

- Regular catchup with Simone Newsham, NASCA to discuss NASC practices and areas for alignment or where support and guidance may be required.
- The DCE and ADCE met with Health NZ leadership to discuss health and safety and behavioural support.
- Meeting with Chair and newly appointed CEO of NZ Health Group to discuss a range of priority areas including the new residential pricing model, and health and safety processes. NZHG also talked to us about their Electronic Visitor Verification programme and have offered to host DSS officials to discuss how EVV might benefit DSS and the provider sector.
- Regular quarterly meeting of the CEO provider forum. The main topics of discussion were Budget 2025 investment for DSS and work to improve our audits and critical incidents programmes.

Priority workstream updates

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Future Design	Residential Pricing: - Community Group Home Pricing Model was announced 22 May with planned communications released to internal stakeholders and NASCs. - Communications to Community Group Home Providers commenced 6 June. - We have given an initial presentation on the new pricing model, there will be further presentations in the coming weeks. NASC Budgets: - NASC/EGL site budgets announced 23 May with letters to NASCs and EGL sites and information sessions provided to DSS Portfolio Managers, EGL site Directors and Connectors as well as NASCs. Recommendations 5 & 6 - Programme Planning for implementation has begun, to support implementation once Cabinet has agreed direction.	- Letters to providers – week of 16 June 2025 - CGH Contract: Request for Applications Opens – 16 June – 31 July - Payments made to providers 18 July 1 July – new NASC budgets commence. - Date TBC: announcement of Cabinet decisions. We are planning key messages, collateral, and provider engagement for initial announcement.

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Policy and data	Stabilising - Final revisions to cabinet paper, preparation of Aide-Memoire - Community consultation report drafted and in internal review	Stabilising 19 June – Cabinet paper to be lodged for SOU 25 June – Cabinet paper at SOU. - July – Final findings of community consultation (to be prepared for public release post-Cabinet)
	s9(2)(f)(iv)	s9(2)(f)(iv)
Capability uplift	- Delivered Community Group Homes Pricing Model Information Sessions (130 providers attended on 6 June) to providers as well as to NASC providers (26 attended on 4 June – hosted by NASCA). - Further information session held on 10 June on procurement approach for new agreements. December under a new commercial model. - Progressing NASC ancillary contract extensions.	Notable contract expiry dates: 30 June – NASC agreements expire, variation planning in progress 31 August – Residential ARC agreements expire, procurement planning underway 30 September – Community Day Services contracts expiring

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
		• 31 October – Supported Living, and Home and Community Support Services contracts expiring. • 30 November – Residential Community Group Homes contracts expire • Mid-July – Quarterly report on progress against recommendations from Rapid Assurance Review

Contact: Future Design and Policy workstreams: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)
 Capability Uplift workstream: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Engagements, communications and media update

Provider Newsletter

The next newsletter is due to go out to more than 1000 subscribers on Thursday 19 June.

Community Update

[Community update - 28 May 2025 | Disability Support Services](#) was published on the DSS website last week and went to more than 1820 subscribers. It had nearly a 60 percent open rate in first two days. The next video is likely to go out following decisions on Recs 5 and 6.

Media

There were no media queries over this period.

We made requests for corrections to NZ Doctor and CCS Disability Action on a news story and a website article respectively following their post-Budget coverage. NZ Doctor said total disability spending had increased \$240m over the 4-year period, rather than \$1bn. And CCS Disability Action said there had been a \$5m increase in disability support funding. They updated their content. We also provided additional information on the DSS website for clarity.

Contact: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Updates on ongoing work

Te Roopu Taurima

On 8 June 2025, we received a media article about pending industrial action and protests involving disability workers at Te Roopu Taurima (TPT). TPT provides support to disabled people with intellectual impairments, based on kaupapa Māori values. The 38 disability workers are represented by the Public Service Association (PSA).

DSS contacted TRT who assured us that the proposed industrial action would not impact the provision of their community residential services. In the days since, the disability workers and TRT agreed to re-enter mediation. The agreement will avert strike action and the workers' suspension without pay.

Relevant article: [Disability care workers and Māori services provider step back from industrial conflict - NZ Herald](#)

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

National Quality Leaders' Group meet in Wellington

On Tuesday 10 June the DSS Quality Team hosted the second meeting of the National Quality Leaders' Group (NQLG). The NQLG is made up of senior quality leaders from across 13 DSS-funded disability support service providers, covering a range of care settings, and 3 representatives from NASCs. Nominees were sought from our CEO Forum members.

This was the first face to face meeting in Wellington. A wide range of topics were discussed throughout the day, including key challenges being faced, emerging broader issues across the sector, opportunities for improvement and new initiatives / best practice quality examples that could be shared. This will help inform future priorities.

Key focus was on the improvements and streamlining being implemented from 1 July on critical incident reporting, a deeper dive and workshopping on harm categories for reporting, with guest speakers addressing the group from Te Tāhū Hauora – Health Quality and Safety Commission.

We also took the opportunity to update providers on changes across our DSS work programmes, including our plans for an enhanced audit programme, and system improvements to the management of our critical incidents and complaints, with other DSS leaders invited to address the group.

There was valuable discussion on potential cross-organisation collaboration, scoping topics for the upcoming quality provider forums and identifying areas where providers would value guidance on, to improve consistency in practice.

Overall, the meeting was very positive, with lots of great discussion, and networking opportunities. As the group matures, we hope that providers may host meetings and the group will be co-chaired (by DSS and a provider representative) so it becomes more self-managing in time.

The NQLG will meet quarterly with the next meeting likely to be online in September. We plan to hold two online and two face to face meetings annually. Members self-fund their attendance for any out-of-town travel.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

OLA requests

Official Information Act requests

Since the previous Fortnightly Report, you received 1 new request for official information. We also continue to handle an additional 16 requests for official information.

Requester	Topic	Due date to the Minister	Due date to the requester
s9(2)(a)		23 June 2025	30 June 2025

Upcoming papers

Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 25 June	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 5 and 6 (final decisions).	Alastair Hill, DSS Taskforce
s9(2)(a)		

Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
Mid June	Ministerial report: Equipment Modification Services update	Equipment Modification Services rebates and opportunities for improving transparency of rebates	Sarah Payne, Regional Manager Central
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
Mid-July	Quarterly briefing: Progress on responding to the Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management recommendations	Quarterly reporting on this progress	Catherine Poutasi, Director Commissioning

**Disability
Support Services**



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Fortnightly Report

Week ending 27 June 2025

Confidential to the Minister for Disability Issues

Hon Louise Upston

REP/25/6/480



Contents

Fortnightly Report.....1

 Contents..... 2

 Disability Support Services Delivery 3

 Recent engagements..... 3

 Priority workstream updates 4

 Engagements, communications and media update 7

 Updates on ongoing work 7

 OIA requests 8

 Official Information Act requests 8

 Upcoming papers 9

 Upcoming Cabinet papers..... 9

 Upcoming reports 9

Disability Support Services Delivery

Recent engagements

We continue to meet regularly with key sector stakeholders. Meetings in the last fortnight included:

- DSS staff supported the I.Lead 2025 conference at Te Papa on 17 and 18 June. The conference brought together 60 young people from around the country to Wellington, and over the two days, they developed recommendations on what change they would like to see.
- Chris Bunny met with the NZDSN Board.
- Al Hill met with the Waikato EGL leadership group to update them on the work of the Taskforce and Budget 2025 funding.

Priority workstream updates

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Future Design	• NASC/EGL Budgets: The final steps to support delivery of NASC/EGL site budgets involve updates to the operational policy and updates to the Review Panel terms of reference. These are nearing completion for the beginning of the new financial year. NASC/EGL site budgets 2025/26 have been approved to transition to BAU, with handover made in the final week of the financial year. • Residential Pricing Model: Community Group Homes providers were notified of advanced provider payments and they were provided an estimate of their increase. • Needs assessment, allocation, and flexible funding settings: Implementation planning is underway pending Cabinet decisions. We are working with your office on the planning for announcements and a draft PR and Q&A have been provided to your office this week. We will discuss these with you at the next DSS officials meeting.	• 16 June – Community Group Homes Contract: Request for application opens. • 1 July – New NASC budgets commence. • 18 July – Advanced payments made to providers. • July TBC: Announcement of Cabinet decisions. We are planning key messages, collateral, and provider engagement for initial announcement.

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Policy and Data	Stabilising - Cabinet paper lodged for SOU – deferred to 16 July. - Draft report on community consultation findings completed and in review. - Ongoing work on additional policy questions as part of preparing for implementation including: detailed cohort analysis and the pros and cons of various options for transitioning flexible funding users to new allocations.	Stabilising 16 July – Cabinet paper presented at SOU. - July – Final findings of community consultation prepared for public release post-Cabinet.
	Strengthening Internal MSD Policy Reference Group has been established.	s9(2)(f)(iv)
	s9(2)(f)(iv) We have connected with the Ministry of Education to work with them on cross-agency policy considerations around Learning Support following discussion at this week's Ministerial Disability Leadership Group meeting.	

Workstream	Status update	Upcoming milestones
Capability Uplift	• Community Group Homes pricing model and contract panel Request for Applications (RFA) ○ Released communications to providers on the DSS website about the Request for Applications (RFA) for Community Group Homes providers Pricing Model and community residential contract panel. The RFA is open now and closes on 30 July. ○ On 3 July we will hold an industry briefing webinar for the request for application (RFA) process for the Residential Services Panel Agreement. ○ Finalised an update to the Community Group Homes panel agreements service specifications. • Prepared letters to Aged Residential Care providers about one-year extensions to these contracts (to 31 August 2026 with funding levels matching Health NZ). • Finalising the DSS commissioning framework. • Planning is underway for us to test the market for the next Cochlear implants service provision contract. This includes a Request for Information that will be released to the market in early July.	• 3 July – CGH provider industry briefing re Request for Applications. • Mid-July – Quarterly report on progress against recommendations from Rapid Assurance Review. Notable contract expiry dates: • 30 June – NASC agreements expire, variation planning in progress. • 31 August – Residential ARC agreements expire, procurement planning underway. • 30 September – Community Day Services contracts expiring. • 31 October – Supported Living, and Home and Community Support Services contracts expiring. • 30 November – Residential Community Group Homes contracts expire.

Contact: Future Design and Policy workstreams: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)
 Capability Uplift workstream: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Engagements, communications, and media update

Communications

The Provider Newsletter was distributed to 1,134 people on Tuesday 24 June.

Work on planning for your announcement on improvements to needs assessment, allocation, and flexible funding settings is underway. A communications plan, draft PR, talking points, and FAQ will be provided to your office on Wednesday 25 June.

The Communications team continues to support engagement and communication activities for the implementation of the new pricing model for CGH and associated procurement approach. This includes updating our website with information [for providers](#), and publishing the [Request for Application Open for Community Residential Services Panel](#).

Media

There have been no media queries over this period.

Media and social media commentary has dropped back again following some initial publications after Budget 2025. We will continue to monitor this actively, particularly to correct stories misrepresenting funding and 'cuts' to packages.

Contact: Alastair Hill, Programme Director, DSS Taskforce, s9(2)(a)

Updates on ongoing work

NASC update

All NASC contracts are being extended for one year to 30 June 2026, to with a right of renewal for an additional year, depending on performance.

Two presentations have been delivered to NASCs on the introduction to Community Group Homes pricing model, and how this will affect them. These presentations have been followed by information sessions for residential providers on how the pricing model will be applied.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

Disability Support Services funding for Equipment and Modification Services

We have recently allocated an additional \$1.2 million in one-off funding to reduce waiting times for access to Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) in the 2024/25 financial year. EMS are early intervention solutions that prevent disabled people entering care, support people's independence and can reduce the hours of carer support required.

The DSS contracted EMS Providers, Enable New Zealand and Accessable, have confirmed that with the additional funding they are both now able to meet all higher priority requests and three-quarters of the waitlisted lower priority requests. This equates to approximately an additional 490 EMS solutions for disabled people.

This process follows an additional prioritisation process that was introduced in March 2024 to manage budgets, while ensuring disabled people with the highest needs could continue to access EMS.

Enable NZ and Accessable are working with EMS Assessors (primarily employed by Health NZ) to process the waitlisted EMS requests over the next month.

DSS will continue to closely monitor waitlisted priority requests.

Contact: Anne Shaw, Associate DCE, DSS, s9(2)(a)

OIA requests

Official Information Act requests

Since the previous Fortnightly Report, you received no new requests for official information. We continue to handle an additional 15 requests for information.

Upcoming papers

Upcoming Cabinet papers

Cabinet Committee	Title	Lead
SOU: 16 July	Report back on the implementation of the Independent Review of DSS: recommendations 5 and 6 (final decisions).	Alastair Hill, DSS Taskforce
s9(2)(f)(iv)		

Upcoming reports

Due date	Title	Description	Lead
June	Ministerial report: Equipment Modification Services update	Equipment Modification Services rebates and opportunities for improving transparency of rebates	Sarah Payne, Regional Manager Central
s9(2)(f)(iv)			
Mid-July	Quarterly briefing: Progress on responding to the Rapid Assurance Review: Commercial Management recommendations	Quarterly reporting on this progress	Catherine Poutasi, Director Commissioning