

Taskforce Update

October 2024



Welcome to the second update from the Disability Support Services Taskforce.

What you've told us

We're grateful for the engagement from the community and sector in our work and have appreciated the various feedback and ideas that have already been sent to us or provided as we've been getting out and meeting with people.

Since our first update last week, we've had feedback from some families, whānau and carers that they didn't feel recognised by our initial communications. We acknowledge the important role of families/whānau, aiga and carers to support disabled people. Thank you to those who provided feedback on this.

We shared in our update last week we've started to meet with different groups and organisations, and we'll continue to do this in coming months. We continue to build our work programme to respond to the Independent Review recommendations.

What's the plan?

This week, our Deputy Chief Executive in charge of DSS, Chris Bunny, spoke at the Delivering Disability Support Services Conference in Auckland. As well as being the overall head of day-to-day operations for DSS, Chris also heads the Taskforce that is leading further work on the disability system.

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He talked about why the Taskforce was set up by the Government, and where to from here. The origin was the August [Independent Review](#) findings that Disability Support Services (DSS) could not continue in its current state. What we heard from some of those who attended the conference was the Independent Review is right about the issues raised. The Review found there was unsustainable spending and a lack of fairness and transparency around what support disabled people can access. The work of the Taskforce is about how we go in actioning these recommendations.

While a number of steps have been taken to urgently stabilise the disability support system, further work is needed. The next phase of the DSS Taskforce work is policy design to put DSS on a sustainable basis longer-term, better managing cost pressures and improving consistency, fairness and transparency.

Policy work is centred on three recommendations of the Independent Review:

- reviewing contract and pricing models for residential care;
- updating the assessment and allocation settings for individuals based on level of need;
- and establishing criteria for access to flexible funding and reviewing the flexible funding guidelines to improve clarity and consistency.

These are [Recommendations 5 and 6, and part of Recommendation 2](#).

Engagement will be taking place to support the Policy work and more information will be shared on our new website about this.

We're also working with other agencies on areas of shared interest, particularly where we can bring clarity and simplicity to the system. These include Health New Zealand and the Ministry of Education on areas like Residential Intellectual Disability Secure Services (RIDSS), Child Development Services (CDS) and Dual Funding arrangements.

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We acknowledge there are some long standing issues across agencies with information sharing and overlapping processes. If we can take steps to make the system and arrangements simpler and easier, we're keen to do that.

What's coming up next?

A stand-alone website for DSS will be up by the end of this month, replacing the temporary landing page on MSD's website. We will gradually be building this and moving over content from the Ministry of Disabled People.

We will provide an update on the new website letting you know when you can subscribe to regular newsletters.

We've established a temporary email address for you to share your ideas (dss_ideas@msd.govt.nz). Thank you to everyone who has messaged us so far with your ideas. We acknowledge and fully appreciate there is a lot of interest in the Taskforce's work from the community and sector.

END