# THE WORKING MATTERS DASHBOARD REPORTING PROGRESS ON THE NZ DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ACTION PLAN - MARCH 2023

***This version of the dashboard is formatted to be more accessible for screen readers.   
The PDF version may be more accessible for those not using a screen reader.***

## The action plan is a living document and new actions are listed in this dashboard where they address one of the six priority areas and are consistent with the Kaupapa outlined in Working Matters. This dashboard provides an opportunity to showcase progress as well as identify new actions that could be progressed to address the action plan priorities alongside Government’s broader work programme. Actions have been grouped in their priority areas and highlights are reported on together

## Objective one: Support people to steer their own employment futures

### Priority 1: Positive expectations for disabled school leavers

Actions:

1. Access to employment services while still at school
2. Career building support (including whānau)
3. Work experience/transition pathways, especially for those with significant learning disabilities
4. Increased visibility of disabled people in VET sector

Responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Education.

*Progress report- Activity highlights in the last six months including further details on delivery and milestones:*

* **MoE is developing new content for the School Leavers’ Toolkit website which includes advice and information for school leavers with disabilities**. MoE recently presented the website to the NCEA Disabilities and Learning Support Panel to get advice on how to improve the accessibility, usability, and usefulness of the site for school leavers with different disabilities.

Based on the NCEA Disabilities and Learning Support Panel advice, MoE are looking to further develop the website and its content to better support young disabled people to find employment and build careers. MoE are aiming to begin this work in the next financial year, 2023/2024.

* **MSD’s Employment Service in Schools pilot provides access to employment services for disabled high school students.** Student referrals are increasing each month and funding for the pilot has been extended to 30 June 2023. The pilot has been evaluated and MSD is developing future options for the service

Provided in **5** regions

**278** students referred (as at 27 April 2023)

**102** Schools participating **(an additional 7 schools since last reporting)**

* **The TEC ‘Inspiring the Future Programme’ continues to run events in schools** where volunteer ‘role models’ from the world of work come to talk to and inspire students. TEC actively encourages neurodiverse and disabled role models to join the programme to talk about their career pathways and education with primary and intermediate aged school children.

28role models have identified themselves as having a variety of disabilities, including, intellectual disability/impairment, physical disability/impairment and neurodiversity.

* **RoVE changes took effect for the vocational education and training system from 1 January 2023, including learner component funding as part of the unified funding system**. Learner component funding is allocated to providers for supporting four groups of underserved learners who traditionally have not been well served by the education system in the past, including disabled learners (and Māori and Pacific disabled learners). These learners are most at risk of not completing VET qualifications, and/or face a range of disadvantages in the VET system.

We expect the learner component funding and RoVE reforms to increase opportunities for disabled learners, including Māori and Pacific disabled learners, to enrol in and complete VET qualifications that have strong employment outcomes. Providers and employers will be encouraged to work together to increase hiring, training, and support for disabled learners, including Māori and Pacific disabled learners. Labour market underutilisation rates could drop, and median salaries could rise.

* **Vocational Education and Training Marketing Campaign -** The Disabled Persons Assembly advised the TEC on their approach to depicting and including disabled people in marketing for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

VET marketing is inclusive and resonates with disabled people.

### Priority 2: Career pathways at all stages of life and for diverse needs and aspirations

Actions:

1. Greater access to career transitions, e.g., apprenticeships, He Poutama Rangatahi, retraining options
2. More paid internships from tertiary
3. Refreshed accessible careers information

Responsibility of the Tertiary Education Commission, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

*Progress report - Activity highlights in the last six months including further details on delivery and milestones:*

* **People receiving the Supported Living Payment can access MSD's Training Incentive Allowance (TIA)** to help with fees and other study costs for training at Levels 4 to 7 on the NZ Qualifications Framework.

**522** people receiving the SLP were receiving a TIA at the end of March 2023. This is **an increase** of **39 people** from this time last year, and represents 21% of TIA recipients.

* **MoE are updating the guidelines that support schools in the design and development of their career’s education and guidance programmes.** These will provide universal information that schools can use to design their local curriculum to support pathway and career development for all their learners, including disabled learners.
* **The Flexi-Wage expansion continues to support people into work**. Flexi-wage is an MSD employment programme that helps job seekers get a job and the skills needed to do that job. Flexi-wage support can include training and in-work support, as well as a contribution to wages.

As at March 2023, there have been a total of 25,581 Flexi-Wage placements of which **3,066** have declared a disability, injury or health condition at referral. This is an increase of **906** people since the last round of reporting.

* **Tahatū is the new online career planning solution being developed by TEC as the ‘next generation’ of the careers.govt.nz website.** One priority audience for Tahatū is disabled people. Elements of Tahatū that have been developed to date comply with the web content accessibility guidelines and the design process will ensure continued compliance.

Tahatū development is continuing throughout 2023 and 2024 with new features continuing to be rolled out each quarter. Tahatū will meet the New Zealand Government Web Standards and aims to meet international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at level AA.

TEC conducted several pieces of research in 2022 which included disabled people and their support people, of the 76 people it interviewed through one-on-one sessions, 15% identified as having learning needs and/or disabilities. TEC also talked to career practitioners who work specifically in this space.

The insights from this research will feed into the design of Tahatū and for future improvements.

## Objective two: Back people who want to work and employers with the right support

### Priority 3: More and better employment services

1. Provide security for SLP and other benefit recipients to try work
2. Value diverse work outcomes and pathways to work within Ministry of Social Development (MSD) systems (including part-time and intermittent work)
3. Expand specialist disability employment services
4. Scale up integrated health and employment services to strengthen integration between primary mental health and addiction services and employment services
5. Develop a Diploma in Employment Support

Responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Health.

*Progress report - Activity highlights in the last six months including further details on delivery and milestones:*

* **MSD has progressed work under the action to extend the period Supported Living Payment recipients** can work more than 15 hours a week. The Supported Living Payment is a weekly payment to help people who have, or are caring for someone with, a significant health condition, injury or disability.

A Bill has to make the change to be ready to be introduced

* **MSD is continuing to strengthen and expand integrated health and employment services through its Oranga Mahi programme**.
* Here Toitū is a partnership between MSD and four Primary Healthcare Organisations.
* “Take Charge” in Christchurch and “E Ara E” in Auckland, are Youth models of IPS and they have both been extended, to support young people with mild to moderate Mental Health conditions to find and stay in employment.
* MSD’s Whītiki Tauā virtual mentoring service, which connects participants to a dedicated mentor for up to 12 months, is now available to all youth nationwide.

Fidelity reviews across all of MSD’s Individualised Placement Services (IPS) have shown that the services are supporting people as intended, however they could be strengthened with the Employment Consultants being more visible in the community. MSD is working with the current partners to strengthen community visibility.

MSD continues to promote Whītiki Tauā. One of MSD’s recent promotions of the service on TikTok received 31 referrals with four days.

* Policy work continues from the **Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP**) review. Further details are provided below under priority six.
* **The NZ Diploma in Health and Wellbeing Applied Practice** continues to be taught and assessed by employment specialists. This is an Applied Diploma where students complete at 200 hours of practical work.

## Priority 4: Information and support for employers

Actions:

1. Raise the visibility of disabled people and people with health conditions as a talent pool
2. Ensure Public Service leads by example with the recruitment and retention of disabled people, and improved data collection to support inclusive workplaces
3. Development of regional employer hubs
4. Develop and expand partnerships between employers and Government with a focus on improving disability employment

Responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

*Progress report - Activity highlights in the last six months including further details on delivery and milestones:*

* **The Lead Work Programme continues to support the employer to be exclusive**:
* Monthly training on the Accessibility Charter continues to be provided across government. Approximately 25-30 government staff are attending the Accessibility Charter training each month.
* MSD has updated the Lead Toolkit and other associated material on the MSD website to relate to all employers and not just state service employers.
* MSD produced an Assistive Technology video for distribution across the Public Service. Several disabled Public Sector staff share their experience and needs of assistive technology in the workplace. It includes an introduction to different types of assistive technology and seeks to bust myths associated with the employment of disabled people. It aims to increase awareness to increase awareness and was provision/ access to Reasonable Accommodations across public service agencies.
* **MSD collaborates with local government through the Mayors’ Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ)**to support young people to live and work in their local communities. Mental health supports and support for people living with disability are funded through the programme.

These supports are delivering results, like Riley, a young man living with cerebral palsy and a speech impediment, who is working as a digger operator at a Hawkes Bay quarry.

## Objective three: Partner with industry to increase good work opportunities for disabled people and people with health conditions

### Priority 5: Inclusive and wellbeing-enhancing workplaces

Actions:

1. Promote accessibility, including in workplaces as well as to and from workplaces
2. The Public Service leads by example with inclusive and wellbeing enhancing workplaces
3. Promote the health benefits of good work to health practitioners
4. Clarify guidance on lawful hiring and recruitment practices and promote lawful and best practice\*

Responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development, Public Services Commission and Human Rights Commission.

*Progress report - Activity highlights in the last six months including further details on delivery and milestones:*

* **The Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill** was introduced into the House on 28 July 2022, passed its first reading in the first week of August 2022 and has gone before the Social Services and Community Committee. MSD have submitted a departmental report responding to the select committee with recommended changes. The Bill establishes an Accessibility Committee to provide recommendations to the Minister for Disability Issues on addressing accessibility barriers and growing accessibility practices progressively over time. This may include barriers and practices in, and to and from, workplaces.

The Select Committee are due to report back to the House on 22 June 2023.

Whaikaha will be responsible for the Bill once enacted, so have ongoing involvement in this work. Prior to enactment, MSD will work with them on an implementation plan

* **The Human Rights Commission** **has continued work to on guidance to clarify and promote lawful hiring and recruitment.**

Government officials are discussing avenues to complete this work.

## Priority 6: Innovative labour market support and business development

1. Policy work on employment products and services / Active Labour Market Policy system will include consideration of the needs of disabled people and people with health conditions
2. Explore the use of digital platforms to support disabled people and people with health conditions to get employment and to support them while they are in employment
3. Explore social procurement options as a mechanism for government to support disadvantaged jobseekers in partnership with employers

Responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

*Progress report - Activity highlights in the last six months including details on delivery and milestones:*

**MSD is continuing to progress ALMP work resulting from the ALMP review.** Ministers have received updates on work underway regarding options for scaling up existing or introducing new interventions to support people through vocational rehabilitation and integrated mental health and employment supports. MSD is working closely with Te Whatu Ora, ACC, Whaikaha and other population specific agencies as well as external stakeholders in the community and sector to explore options for employment supports for disabled people.

ACC and MSD provided a joint paper for Ministers on ACC’s vocational rehabilitation services. The paper assessed the opportunity for relevant NZII claimants to access these services and for MSD to purchase the services for clients living with musculoskeletal pain or impairments who need support to stay in or return to work.

* MSD has completed a discovery phase of work to explore Customised Employment (CE) as a targeted ALMP for disabled people furthest from the labour market. The discovery phase included:
  + Reviewing international evidence and literature on CE and taking stock of existing supports of this nature in Aotearoa
  + An initial engagement process with stakeholders to understand what CE is and could look like in an Aotearoa context, and to establish if CE is something stakeholders would still like government to explore.

In February 2023 MSD officials reported on the Customised Employment discovery findings to EETMG. Officials are continuing to develop options for this work which will be discussed by EETMG in June 2023. The ALMP workstream is likely to continue to develop over time.

* **MSD is continuing to support social procurement through different partnerships.** Including with Waka Kotahi under an MOU that positions MSD as a Broader Outcomes within the New Zealand Upgrade Programme (NZUP). MSD has also partnered with The Auckland Council on Ngā Puna Pūkenga and were finalists for the NZ Procurement Excellence Awards 2022.

## Long-term impact:

## The goal of this action plan is to help ensure disabled people and people with health conditions have an equal opportunity to access employment

The Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) June quarter helps to measure progress on this goal as it shows the labour market outcome gaps between disabled people and non-disabled people (Source: Stats NZ). As the HLFS data is published once yearly, the statistics below are unchanged from the June 2022 dashboard.

\*Note: a comparison with the HLFS data in previous years are not included in this dashboard because the changes are not statistically significant.

## Outcome Gap June 2022 (HLFS data for people aged 15-64 years)

### NEET rate (15-25 years):

Disabled people 32.4%

Non-disabled people 10.0%

Outcome gap 22.4%

### Employment Rate:

Disabled people 41.5%

Non-disabled people 80.4%

Outcome gap of 38 .9%

### Labour Force Participation Rate:

Disabled people 45.0%

Non-disabled people 83.1%

Outcome gap of 38.1%

### Unemployment Rate:

Disabled people 7.9%

Non-disabled people 3.3%

Outcome gap of 4.6%

### Median Weekly Income (wages/salaries):

Disabled people $960

Non-disabled people $1,200

Outcome gap of $240

### Underutilisation rate (Combines people who are unemployed, underemployed or who are just outside of the labour market, including people who are discouraged. It is a broader measure of untapped labour market participation than the unemployment rate alone.)

Disabled people: 21.5%

Non-disabled people: 8.9%

Underutilisation gap: 12.6%

## Featured initiatives and updates

### Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH is a business led internship for high school leavers aged 18 to 21 years old who have learning disabilities, and who want to enter the workforce. The total immersion one year internship is designed to give students marketable work experience and skills to compete for a job in their chosen field and relates to Objective One of Working Matters.

Project SEARCH has been running since 2019.The 2021 cohort of Project SEARCH had 7 interns graduating. From this group three have gone into part-time employment and another three have gone into full-time employment.

Several different approaches are continuing to be trialled to find employment support that best suits the needs of transitioning interns into employment to mirror the success in the UK and US Project SEARCH models.

There has been interest from other regions about setting up Project SEARCH programmes within Health NZ and other employers. Sustainable funding would support the programme to continue to run in Canterbury and to expand into other regions.

### Whaikaha Chief Executive appointed

In August 2022, Paula Tesoriero was appointed as Chief Executive, Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People. Paula has lived experience of disability herself. Paula is a widely respected and experienced leader with deep connections to the disability community. Former Minister for Disability Issues, Hon Poto Williams announced Paula’s appointment by saying, “I’m delighted someone of this calibre, who has experience, mana and deep connections to the disability community has been appointed to this important role.”

The new Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People website has an employment section that can help people who want to find employment or to help make a workplace more inclusive. This links to relevant supports and servies provided by government and wider – many of which are reported in this dashboard.