# Disability Support Services and Ministry of Social Development, Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

# Principal Advisor Quality Assurance

## Our purpose

**Manaaki tangata, Manaaki whānau**

We help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent

## Our commitment to Māori

As a **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** partner we are committed to supporting and enabling Māori, whānau, hapū, Iwi and communities to realise their own potential and aspirations.

## Our strategic direction



## Our Values



## Working in the Public Service

Ka mahitahi mātou o te ratonga tūmatanui kia hei painga mō ngā tāngata o Aotearoa i āianei, ā, hei ngā rā ki tua hoki. He kawenga tino whaitake tā mātou hei tautoko i te Karauna i runga i āna hononga ki a ngāi Māori i raro i te Tiriti o Waitangi. Ka tautoko mātou i te kāwanatanga manapori. Ka whakakotahingia mātou e te wairua whakarato ki ō mātou hapori, ā, e arahina ana mātou e ngā mātāpono me ngā tikanga matua o te ratonga tūmatanui i roto i ā mātou mahi.

In the public service we work collectively to make a meaningful difference for New Zealanders now and in the future. We have an important role in supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi.  We support democratic government. We are unified by a spirit of service to our communities and guided by the core principles and values of the public service in our work.

## The outcomes we want to achieve

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| New Zealanders get the support they require | New Zealanders are resilient and live in inclusive and supportive communities | New Zealanders participate positively in society and reach their potential |

## We carry out a broad range of responsibilities and functions including

* Employment, income support and superannuation
* Community partnerships, programmes and campaigns
* Advocacy for seniors, disabled people and youth
* Public Housing assistance and emergency housing
* Resolving claims of abuse and neglect in state care
* Student allowances and loans

## **He whakataukī\***

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| --- | --- |
| Unuhia te rito o te harakeke  Kei hea te kōmako e kō?  Whakatairangitia, rere ki uta, rere ki tai;  Ui mai ki ahau,  He aha te mea nui o te ao?  Māku e kī atu,  He tangata, he tangata, he tangata\* | If you remove the central shoot of the flaxbush  Where will the bellbird find rest?  Will it fly inland, fly out to sea, or fly aimlessly;  If you were to ask me,  What is the most important thing in the world?  I will tell you,  It is people, it is people, it is people |

\* We would like to acknowledge Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri Trust for their permission to use this whakataukī

## Position detail

### Overview of position

The Principal Advisor Quality Assurance, provides strategic leadership and expert advice on the management, analysis, and resolution of quality issues across the organisation, ensuring timely, fair, and effective resolution.

This role champions a culture of accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement, ensuring that quality concerns and related issues are investigated, and resolved in alignment with legislative, contractual and human-rights based obligations.

This is a significant component of the Disability Support Services (DSS) quality assurance activity and requires strong engagement across the quality team, and both internal and external stakeholders.

The role also provides expert advice on complex cases, identifies systemic issues, and supports resolution and improvements to service delivery and the experience of care received by disabled people who are supported by DSS.

### Location

Various

### Reports to

Manager Quality Assurance

## Key responsibilities

* Provide leadership in the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of systems and processes for the resolution of quality related issues, ensuring alignment with disability rights, safeguarding principles, and regulatory obligations.
* Oversee complex and high-risk issues providing expert advice, coordination, and assurance on appropriate investigation, resolution, and follow-up actions.
* Lead analysis and reporting of trends, systemic issues, and root causes arising from quality issues, informing organisational learning, continuous improvement, and policy development.
* Mentor and guide staff and providers to strengthen local capability and consistent practices in handling of issues, escalation and response, with a focus on engagement with disabled people and whānau.
* Engage with external agencies, advocacy groups, and oversight bodies to support transparent, person-centred responses and uphold the rights and voices of disabled people.
* Promote a culture of openness and accountability, embedding learning from complaints, incidents and related issues, into service design, risk management, and strategic decision-making.

## Embedding te ao Māori

* Embedding Te Ao Māori (te reo Māori, tikanga, kawa, Te Tiriti o Waitangi) into the way we do things at MSD.
* Building more experience, knowledge, skills and capabilities to confidently engage with whānau, hapū and iwi.

## Health, safety and security

* Understand and implement your Health, Safety and Security (HSS) accountabilities as outlined in the HSS Accountability Framework.
* Ensure you understand, follow and implement all Health, Safety and Security and wellbeing policies and procedures.

## Emergency management and business continuity

* Remain familiar with the relevant provisions of the Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plans that impact your business group/team.
* Participate in periodic training, reviews and tests of the established Business Continuity Plans and operating procedures.

## Know-how

* Relevant tertiary qualification or equivalent experience
* An experienced system thinker and leader, with an ability to mentor junior staff to build collective team expertise, capability and performance
* A demonstrated ability to influence and lead behaviour change, using data and evidence to guide and support decisions and actions
* Deep knowledge of quality assurance methodologies and tools for complaints, critical incidents and issues resolution, particularly across the health and disability sectors
* Experience in project management and change management in driving for results
* Significant experience in data analysis and performance measurement to monitor the impact of assurance activity.
* Comprehensive knowledge of stakeholder management with an ability to develop, maintain and strengthen trusting and respectful relationships.
* Knowledge of relevant government legislative requirements that impact the activities of the team, DSS, and MSD.
* Proven ability to identify and deliver measurable improvement across quality assurance domains, aligned with the DSS strategic vision and intent.
* Highly skilled in identifying and managing strategic and operational risks, issues and mitigations, ensuring these are resolved or escalated as appropriate, in the spirit of no surprises.
* Strong experience in maintaining and fostering positive working relationships, including representing the team and DSS business unit effectively in any external stakeholder meetings or cross-Ministry programmes, and in building the confidence of stakeholders.
* Sound knowledge and understanding of the disability system in the Aotearoa New Zealand.
* An understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the implications of working in partnership to achieve improved outcomes, across a diversity of population group, maintaining cultural safety across quality systems.

## Attributes

* Strong critical thinking, with an ability to challenge the status quo, while maintaining empathy and impartiality.
* Highly skilled in inquiry, investigation and resolution of issues including complaints, and critical incidents with a view to driving improved practice and service delivery.
* An ability to influence behaviour change, through the use of data and evidence in decision making.
* Excellent skills in problem solving and decision-making.
* High level of organisational and environmental awareness.
* Exercises sound judgement and political sensitivity.
* Excellent research, numerical, planning and organisational skills
* Ability to think strategically with a view to future requirements.
* Highly effective communication skills, both written and oral, with the ability to translate technical information for diverse audiences
* Flexible, adaptable and pragmatic
* Strong person-centred focus
* Establishes a high-performing culture and learning environment.
* Welcomes and values diversity and contributes to an inclusive working environment where differences are acknowledged and respected.

## Key relationships

### Internal

* Quality Assurance & Improvement team
* DSS Leadership team
* DSS clinical leads
* DSS Operational Delivery Team
* Other DSS and MSD business groups
* Counterparts and staff across MSD and DSS

### External

* Disability Support Service funded providers
* DSS contracted audit providers
* Contracted providers delivering quality assurance and improvement activities for DSS
* DSS facilitated Quality Forums
* New Zealand Disability Support Network
* Office of the Health and Disability Commission
* Ministry of Health – HealthCERT
* Disability community partnership groups
* Other government agencies and cross agency forums and governance groups involved in quality assurance and improvementOther

### Delegations

* Financial – No
* Human Resources - No

### Direct reports - No

### Security clearance - No

### Children’s worker - No

Limited adhoc travel may be required

**Position Description Updated:** July 2025