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

# Principal Advisor Workforce

## 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 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 harakekeKei 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 flaxbushWhere 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 Workforce Development provides strategic and operational leadership to drive sector workforce capability and capacity improvements across the disability support system.

This role is central to identifying, facilitating, and implementing system-level workforce development initiatives that strengthen service delivery, address workforce gaps, and support a culture of continuous learning and professional growth.

Key aspects of the role involve building strong, collaborative relationships with internal teams, providers, sector partners, and workforce organisations to ensure workforce initiatives are person-centred and align with the principles of Enabling Good Lives.

The Principal Advisor supports the design, implementation, and evaluation of practical workforce development tools, processes, and change initiatives that enable consistency, reduce inequities, and foster a sustainable and skilled sector workforce.

### Location

Various

### Reports to

Manager Quality Improvement

## Key responsibilities

* Lead innovative and evidence-informed workforce development initiatives ensuring alignment with disability rights, safeguarding principles, and regulatory obligations.
* Provide strategic advice on sector workforce capacity, career pathways, skills development, and training needs.
* Oversee complex and high-risk workforce issues, providing expert advice and early resolution strategies.
* Lead the development and implementation of workforce development strategies and frameworks to address system and practice gaps.
* Lead sector workforce planning and support cross-agency efforts to strengthen workforce sustainability.
* Build and maintain trusted relationships with providers, sector partners, training institutes, disabled people, and whānau to design and implement meaningful workforce initiatives.
* Translate policy, standards, and strategic priorities into operational workforce development solutions and tools.
* Identify workforce trends, challenges, and opportunities through data analysis, sector feedback, and best practice review.
* Provide thought leadership in engagement, change management, and organisational learning for workforce development.
* Present detailed reports and recommendations to senior management on sector workforce development, informing strategic decisions.
* Mentor and support staff and stakeholders to strengthen workforce development capability.
* Promote a culture of openness, accountability, and continuous improvement in workforce practices.
* Represent the organisation in cross-agency workforce forums and lead sector alignment with workforce development principles.
* Implement best-practice engagement, communication, and feedback channels to ensure workforce voices are included.
* Monitor and evaluate the impact of workforce initiatives on sector capability and service quality.

## 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 and/or equivalent experience.
* Highly skilled in systems thinking, leadership, workforce analysis and workforce planning.
* Demonstrated ability to influence, lead, and enable behaviour change across the sector through workforce initiatives.
* Deep knowledge of sector workforce development methodologies, best practice frameworks, and training requirements, particularly in health and disability sectors.
* Significant experience in project management and change management for workforce improvement.
* Capable in data analysis and performance measurement to monitor workforce development effectiveness.
* Skilled stakeholder engagement, including developing trust with provider networks, workforce stakeholders, and professional bodies.
* Knowledge of legislative requirements affecting the workforce, MSD, and DSS operations.
* Strong risk management capacity for workforce strategy, escalation, and issue resolution.
* Able to represent the team/organisation effectively in workforce and sector forums.
* Comprehensive understanding of New Zealand’s disability system and its workforce.
* Understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and partnership implications for workforce development.
* Strong ability to foster high-performing, inclusive, and learning-oriented workforce culture.
* Welcomes diversity and supports inclusive approaches to workforce planning and engagement.

## 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.
* High level of organisational and environmental awareness.
* Exercises sound judgement and is political savvy.
* 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 exceptional ability to translate technical information into information suited to 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
* 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
* Disability community partnership groups
* Other government agencies and sector workforce training and working groups

## Other

### 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