

Summary of changes from Select Committee report back

The Social Services and Community Select Committee's report back on the Disability Support Services Bill will happen on 13 August 2026.

The Select Committee has recommended the Bill move forward with amendments that respond to feedback it heard from the disability community during the select committee process.

In summary the key changes to the Bill have:

- Clarified the role of families.
- Included people centred principles to underpin decision making.
- Added a requirement to consult before changes are made to support programmes.

The Government's key priority for the Bill is that disabled people and their families should be able to understand how the disability support service system works and have confidence in how decisions are made.

The Bill will provide a legal framework for Disability Support Services:

- The Bill puts into law the purpose of DSS-funding and the principles for decisions, such as consideration of the safety, dignity, choice and preferences of disabled people. This provides a solid foundation for the DSS system going forward.
- The Bill creates a transparent process for future changes to disability supports and services through a legislative requirement to consult on changes and to consider outcomes for disabled people of any change.
- Introduces certainty regarding employment relationships within the DSS system.

Key changes in response to feedback and recommended by Select Committee are:

Clarifications have been made that there are no new obligations on families. Families continue to provide an important contribution to the wellbeing of their family members.

- **Changes have been made to remove any inference that families had responsibilities in the first instance for the wellbeing of their family members.** The Bill now reflects that families contribute to the care and wellbeing of their family members where appropriate (clause 8).

The Bill now explicitly includes principles which require people making decisions about anyone's disability support services to consider **the choice and preferences of the eligible person, their safety and dignity, and their immediate and long-term needs and circumstances** (clause 8).

- The changes to the principles reflect the Enabling Good Lives (EGL), including:
 - supporting self-determination by taking into account the person's choices and preferences
 - focusing on an everyday life to support ordinary life outcomes
 - ensuring rights based support by having regard to the person's unique needs and circumstances
 - reflecting mana enhancing principles by taking into account a person's dignity and their inherent ability to make decisions about their supports.
- Because these principles are embedded in the Bill itself, decision-makers will not need to interpret and apply other external frameworks.
- The Minister must explicitly consider these principles when establishing or amending support programmes.

The Bill reflects important human rights concepts

- The Bill is consistent with the rights and freedoms affirmed in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. It does not change any obligations that already exist under the New Zealand's human rights framework.

The Bill also reflects important UNCRPD concepts, including:

- participation and involvement in decision-making as reflected in the obligation to consult before putting in place or changing support programmes
- individual choice and preferences, and the safety and dignity of disabled people as outlined in the principles guiding the Bill in clause 8 independent living and community participation (clause 7).
- existing complaint and review pathways continue to be available, including complaints to the Health and Disability Commissioner where applicable.

Disabled people will have a stronger voice in future decisions, and changes to support programmes will need to follow a set process including consultation.

- Specifically, the Bill explicitly requires formal consultation through disabled people's representative organisations before future support programmes are established or changed (clause 11).
- In addition, before changing or establishing a support programme a Minister must also take into account the purpose set out in clause 7 and the principles set out in clause 8 and the likely outcomes for disabled persons.

The Bill will be introducing a mandatory review of the law within 5 years of it coming into effect.
Including that this be reported to Parliament.

Importantly:

- The Bill does not change current eligibility, entitlements or support, or introduce income or asset testing where it is not currently used.
- People will continue to access their supports and funding as they do now.
- Existing assessment and allocation processes continue.