

Disability Support Services



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



Consultation summary: Further improving Disability Support Services

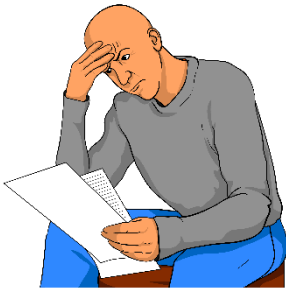


Published: October 2026

Before you start



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.

Some things you can do to make it easier are:



- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



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About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is from **Disability Support Services** at the Ministry of Social Development.

**Disability
Support Services**



Disability Support Services is a business unit in the Ministry of Social Development.

It provides:

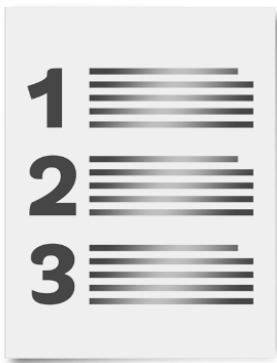
- services for disabled people
- supports for disabled people.



This Easy Read is a short version of the 2026 Disability Support Services **consultation feedback summary**.



Here **consultation feedback** means what people told us they thought about Disability Support Services.



A **summary**:

- is shorter than the main document
- tells you the main ideas.



We call Disability Support Services **DSS** in this Easy Read.

Where it says **we / our / us** in this Easy Read it means DSS.

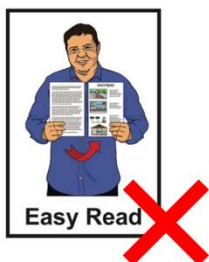


We did the DSS consultation to find out what changes will make disability services better.



You can read the full report at this
website:

www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/consultation



This website is **not** in Easy Read.

About the consultation



We heard from more than 8 hundred and 50 people in the disability community during our consultation.



People took part in the consultation by:

- doing surveys / answering questions
- going to workshops
- writing **submissions**.



Here a **submission** is when somebody tells us what they think about the DSS.



The consultation ran from:

- **8 June 2026**



to

- **31 July 2026.**



Other consultations took place in:

- 2024
- 2025.



This consultation looked at ways to make DSS better by:



- looking at changing the way **assessments** are done
- looking at:



- the money people get
- the support people get
- **flexible** funding.



An **assessment** is when someone checks what DSS services you can get.



Here **flexible funding** is money for support that you can choose how to spend.



The 2026 consultation focused on what the disability community said:

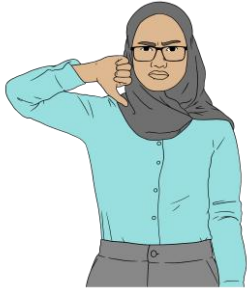
- is important to change
- about what good support would look like for them.





People who took part in the 2026 consultation shared:

- their own experiences using DSS
- things they found hard to do each day
- things they found hard when trying to get support.



Many people told us about bad experiences they had when trying to get the support they need.



Other people said decisions were not:

- **consistent**
- **transparent.**



Here **consistent** means that something is done in the same way each time.



Here **transparent** means it is clear how a decision was made.



Many people said they did not trust the system.

6 main themes



6 main **themes** came up during the consultation.



Here **theme** means the main ideas people shared during the consultation.



This Easy Read tells you about what people said about each theme.

Theme 1 – Support is built around disabled people



People told us disability support should be **tailored** to each person.



Here **tailored** means the support is made to be a good fit for 1 person not everybody.



Support should be about the person like their:

- goals
- strengths
- support needs.





1 way of providing support will not work for everyone.



People said DSS should think about things to support disabled people to:

- take part in community life
- feel included in community life.



People told us support needs can change over time.



Flexible support is an important way to make sure people get the right support at the right time.

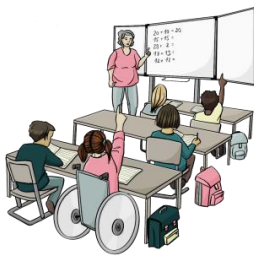


The disability support system should work for everyone who uses it.



This means making things better in the disability support system like:

- assessments
- support from DSS providers.
- funding / money
- how funding / money is used
- education / learning
- employment / jobs in DSS
- **respite**
- support for daily living.



Here **respite** means having a short break from how care is usually done for the:

- carer
- person using support services.

Theme 2 – A system that is easy to navigate



Here **navigate** means being able to work out how to use the disability support system.



People told us the system is very hard to navigate.

This makes it hard to get support.



People told us it would be better for people if they could have 1 main contact person to help them get support.



People told us support agencies should work better together.



People want needs assessors who can:

- understand what support a disabled person needs
- explain what support a disabled person can get.



People should not have to be able to say the right thing to get support they need.



We were told accessible support is very important to the wellbeing of disabled people.



Wellbeing is having a good life in lots of different ways like:

- feeling safe
- being able to learn
- making friends.



1 way to make the lives of disabled people better is by making sure support is easy to get.

People told us the system should be measured by how well people can:

- find the support they need
- be able to live the lives they want to live.

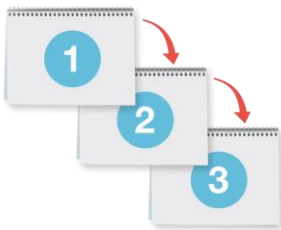


The DSS should not be measured only by what services have been given to people.



People told us the **processes** to use DSS should be:

- easy to navigate
- able to be used easily by disabled people without needing someone to assist them
- more flexible.



Here **processes** are ways of doing things.



People said there were things making it very hard to navigate the system like:

- rules that have to be followed
- **eligibility**
- how people are allowed to spend their support money
- administration like filling out forms.





Eligibility means a person meeting the rules to get DSS.



People told us it should be easy to:

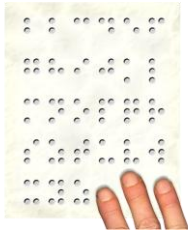
- find the supports they need
- use supports they need.



To do this information should be:

- clear
- up-to-date
- in **alternate formats**.





Alternate formats are ways of giving information like:

- Braille
- Easy Read
- New Zealand Sign Language.



People said information about support is usually hard to find.



They told us they want a main place for information to be kept like on a website.



Having 1 contact person would also be useful to assist a disabled person to navigate the system.

Theme 3 – Confidence and trust in decisions about disability support



People told us people needed to have:

- **confidence** in the disability support system
- trust in decisions made about disability support.



Here **confidence** means believing the DSS is working well.

It is important disabled people can trust their service provider to give them the care they need:

- now
- in the **future**.





The **future** is time that has not happened yet.



The most important things when getting support are that:



- people should be able to trust they will get the services:

- they need
- when they need them

- people should be able to:

- choose the services they need
- have control over how the services work for them



- services should work for the people using them

- services are consistent

- services are safe to use.





People want assessments to be:

- fair
- consistent.



Assessment services need to be able to:

- be trusted
- support the person having the assessment in the right way.



People do not want to have to prove to providers what support they need every time they have an assessment.



People want assessors to:

- say what support is there
- work out what support someone needs
- think about what changes may be needed in the future
- plan for future support needs.



People wanted:

- to know how decisions were made about their support
- more chances to:
 - talk about what support needs they need
 - give **feedback** like doing a short survey from time to time.





Here **feedback** is telling someone what you think about something.



Processes should be made better for people to:

- give feedback
- make complaints.



Feedback should work to make the DSS better for disabled people.

Theme 4 – Proactive support



Here **proactive support** means thinking about the support someone may need before they need it.

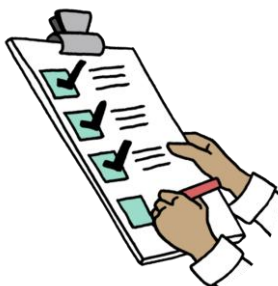


People want the disability support system to be more:

- proactive
- **responsive.**



Responsive means support can change when the needs of a person change.

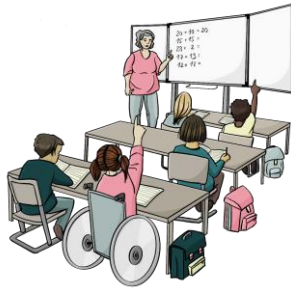


People want a disability support system that supports them to get ready for change.



People told us they want:

- support to be flexible
- ways to make sure support is ready when things change
- ways to plan support around big life changes like:
 - leaving school
 - starting a job
 - moving house.





During big life changes people want organisations to:

- plan support for a person
- work together to make sure the person is getting the support they need.



People told us it was important to:

- get assessments at the right times
- get early interventions / supports
- have ways to let people know what is happening about their support.



Doing these things should stop problems happening in the future for disabled people using support services.

Theme 5 – Supporting carers and whānau



People told us it is important to:

- support carers and whānau / family
- recognise the work of carers and whānau / family.



The wellbeing of carers and whānau / family:



- should be looked after all the time

not



- just when things get bad.



Carers and whānau / family:

- want to be treated as partners / people who work together with DSS
- do not want to be used as a low cost way to support someone.



Carers need to have breaks.

People want more:

- respite services
- ways to get respite
- flexibility in how respite support can be used.



People felt there are not enough:

- respite services
- trained staff to replace carers who need respite.





People told us it is hard to find respite that suits people:

- with different:
 - disability needs
 - interests
 - **cultural** needs
- of different ages



Cultural means to do with your culture.



Culture is a way of:

- thinking that a group shares
- doing things as a group.



There are many different cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand like Deaf culture.



People told us they did not want things like rules to limit different choices for respite.

Theme 6 – Real choice and control



It is very important for disabled people to have:

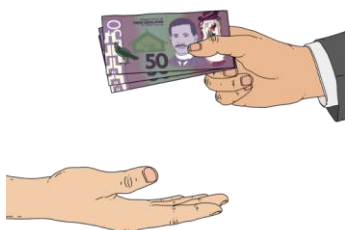
- choice over their own lives
- control over their own lives.



To be able to do this support services need to work well.

People want:

- support in a more flexible way
- to be able to choose how they get their support
- to have a say about who provides their support
- to have a say about how funding can be used for their support.

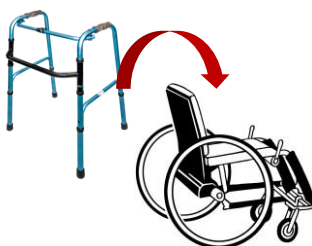




People want to see more:

- providers of disability support services
- support at the time it is needed
- support when it is hard to get support like:
 - on weekends
 - in the evening
 - in rural / country places.

People also told us support should:



- be tailored to the person who needs it
- should be put in place quickly when the needs of a person changes.



Choice and control is very important for young people.



Big life changes for young people mean they need the right support at times like:

- leaving school
- starting to work
- moving house.



People told us they wanted young disabled people to have proactive support at these times.



People said it was important for young people to:

- have social connections like friendships
- have community connections like belonging to sports clubs
- feel like they belong
- be supported in the education / learning they want to do.



Important things to think about when supporting disabled people are:

- **autonomy**
- connecting with others.



Autonomy means being able to make choices about your own life.

What a good DSS will look like



In this part of the Easy Read we tell you what a good DSS will look like.



Led by disabled people

Disabled people are supported to take part in decisions about their own:

- supports
- disability support plans.





Connected services

Disabled people can get:

- coordinated / connected services
- clear information about services
- support to navigate the disability support system.



Trusted

The system makes decisions that are:

- fair
- transparent.



Doing this supports disabled people to reach their life goals.

People feel safe giving feedback about what they think of the DSS.



Proactive

Support:

- is planned
- is ready to be given as soon as it is needed
- assists people to plan for changes.



Inclusive

Here **inclusive** means that everyone can use something.



The system removes **barriers** so disabled people can:

- take part in all parts of life
- connect with their communities.



Here **barriers** are things that stop disabled people from being able to do something.



Sustainable

Disabled people know the right support will always be available when they need it.



Here **sustainable** means something is done in a way that means it can be done that way for a long time.

More information



You can read the full report at this **website:**

www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/consultation



This website is **not** in Easy Read.

**Disability
Support Services**

Contact us if you would like more information about DSS.



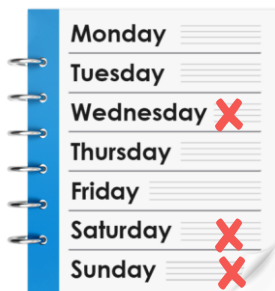
You can **call** us on:

0800 566 601



You can call us from **8:00am** in the morning to **5:00pm** in the evening on:

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Thursday
- Friday.



On Wednesday you can call us from:

- **9:30am** in the morning

to

- **5:00pm** in the evening.



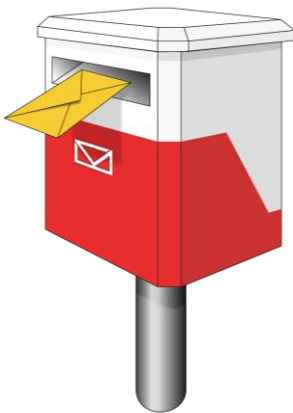


You can also contact us by:

- **emailing** us at:

info@disabilitysupport.govt.nz

- **sending** a letter to us at:



Disability Support Services

Ministry of Social Development

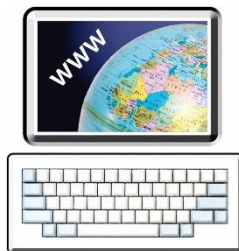
PO Box 1556

Wellington 6140



If you find it hard to use the phone
the **New Zealand Relay** service is for
people who are:

- Deaf / hard of hearing
- deafblind
- speech impaired / find it hard to talk.



You can find out more about the
New Zealand Relay service at:

www.nzrelay.co.nz

Disability Support Services



This information has been written by Disability Support Services at the Ministry of Social Development.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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