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**Disability
Support Services**



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

SUMMARY: Have your say on further improvements to Disability Support Services (DSS)

Adapted in 2026 by Accessible Formats Service,
Blind Low Vision NZ, Auckland

Transcriber's Note: The logo at the top of the page is:
Disability Support Services on the left and Ministry of
Social Development, Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

This document is a summary, you can read the full consultation document on our website (www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/haveyoursay).

Our work so far

Over the past two years, we have listened to our community and taken steps to stabilise the disability support system.

During that time, we've asked about experiences within DSS (available here: <https://shorturl.at/r9sl2>) and about changes to Allocations, Assessment and Flexible Funding (available here: <https://shorturl.at/HfpPv>).

Your feedback has helped shape changes which have made DSS-funded supports more fair, consistent and sustainable - while restoring more choice and flexibility.

What we are consulting on

We are consulting on further improvements we would like to make across six areas of our existing services. You can choose which topics or questions you want to answer. You don't have to answer them all.

You can join the consultation by

- Writing or recording your responses to our questions and sending them by email to DSS_submissions@msd.govt.nz or by post to:

- Disability Support Services, Ministry of Social Development, PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140
- Please contact NZSL_submissions@msd.govt.nz for more details if you would like to make an audio or video submission.
- Completing an online survey – a link is available on our website (www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/haveyoursay).
- Attending an online or in-person workshop. These are between 1.5 and 2 hours long. You can find out when we are holding workshops and how to attend on our website (www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/haveyoursay).
- Submissions close at 5pm on Friday, 31 July 2026.

Topic 1: Outcomes that matter for disabled people

DSS provides supports that help disabled people participate in and make choices about their daily life. We want to be clearer about the outcomes, or the changes that happen, because of the support we provide.

We propose two outcomes that we are responsible for:

- **Daily Living:** providing the essential supports required for everyday life (for example, personal cares, residential care).

- **Safety:** from physical or psychological harm, and freedom from abuse or neglect in the supports we provide.

We propose five wider benefits that we contribute to, alongside other government agencies that provide disability supports:

- **Autonomy:** enabling people to grow, maintain, or regain autonomy in everyday life.
- **Connection:** enabling meaningful personal, social, and community networks.
- **Contribution:** supporting people to contribute meaningfully to their communities.
- **Growth:** supporting people to grow the skills and knowledge required in their everyday life.
- **Experience:** people can feel positive about the direction of their everyday life.

Thinking about this topic, the questions we'd like to ask you are:

1. What outcomes or wider benefits from our services are the most important to you, are there any that we have missed?
2. We have two outcomes that we must achieve (Daily Living and Safety as described above). Can you please rank our five wider benefits in order of importance to you from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important).

3. We want to find ways to measure our progress towards the outcomes and wider benefits described above, what would tell us that things are improving in your life in any of these areas?
4. Do our outcomes and wider benefits reflect the needs of all people that access DSS support?
5. Can you provide us with any additional thoughts about the questions you have just answered, or more generally about what DSS is aiming to achieve for disabled people?

Topic 2: A more proactive approach to support

Alongside the delivery of everyday support, we want to get better at planning for and supporting, people's needs as they change throughout their lives. For example, by providing people with support early to help them maintain their independence or delivering support for children and young people at key points in their development.

Thinking about this topic, the questions we'd like to ask you are:

6. In a more proactive system, what would you want to see happen differently from how the system or services work with you now?
7. What additional supports could DSS provide at key transition points in people's lives (for example, one-off funding to invest in technology, facilitative support

that aims to reduce over time, assistance with navigation, planning, and connection)?

8. Can you provide us with any additional thoughts you have about the questions you have just answered, or on how can we get better at providing the right support at the right time?

Topic 3: Feedback and complaints processes

We want the services we fund, that are delivered by providers, to be the best they can be. To do this, it needs to be easy for you to tell DSS-funded providers when things go well and to complain when they don't.

Thinking about this topic, the questions we'd like to ask you are:

9. Thinking about the support you receive from a DSS provider, what matters to you when you are being supported? How do you know when you have received a quality and safe service?
10. Do you know how to give feedback about the services that you receive from a DSS provider?
11. Do you know how to make a complaint about the services you receive from a DSS provider? Or, how to escalate your complaint when a provider does not address your concerns?

12. Would a short, regular feedback survey be a good way for my DSS provider, and national agencies, to monitor how well my supports and services are working and respond where improvements are needed?
13. How would you prefer to give feedback on the support or services you get from DSS providers?
14. What would give you confidence in a DSS providers' complaints process?
15. Can you provide us with any additional thoughts you have about the questions you have just answered?

Topic 4: Better support for carer respite and breaks

Building on the Draft Carers' Action Strategy Plan (available here: <https://shorturl.at/CVGnz>), we want to think about ways we can improve our existing services to support the health and wellbeing of carers.

Thinking about this topic, the questions we'd like to ask you are:

16. Can you tell us about the issues you, or your carers, face when accessing respite care, day programmes, or other DSS services that support carers?

17. What changes to services for carers would make it easier for you to take a break when you need it most?
18. Can you provide us with any additional thoughts you have about the questions you have just answered on the support DSS provides for carers?

Topic 5: More choice and control in our services

The community has told us that they value flexibility, but don't always want the additional administrative burden of the flexible funding options we currently provide. We want to make flexibility, choice and control available to everyone who receives support funded by DSS.

Thinking about this topic, the questions we'd like to ask you are:

19. Currently there are two main options for DSS support - flexible funding budgets or a fixed range of services available from the providers that DSS funds. What could DSS do to give you more flexibility, choice and control in accessing services; without full responsibility for managing a flexible funding budget?
20. How could DSS improve or add to the services we provide, so they work well for everyone?

21. Are there specific considerations, or different types of services, we should have for children and young people?
22. Are there any services that DSS doesn't currently provide, that we should consider adding, to help deliver better outcomes for disabled people?
23. Can you provide us with any additional thoughts you have about the questions you have just answered about the flexibility and range of services that DSS provides?

Topic 6: Improving our information and advice

We want to understand more about your experiences trying to get the information and advice you need from DSS so we can do better.

Thinking about this topic, the questions we'd like to ask you are:

23. Where do you currently get information about disability supports from?
24. What are the biggest challenges you face when trying to access information about DSS?
25. What information do you want, or need, to know about the services DSS provides?

26. What else could DSS do to make it easier for you to understand and access information about disability supports?
27. What would make it easier to navigate the support for disabled people provided by DSS and other government agencies or community groups?
28. Can you provide us with any additional thoughts you have about the questions you have just answered about the information and advice that DSS provides?

End of SUMMARY: Have your say on further improvements to Disability Support Services (DSS)