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New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

Disability community informs improvements to DSS Bill

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

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New Zealand Government — Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Disability Issues

13 August 2026

Disability community informs improvements to DSS Bill

The Social Services and Community Select Committee's report back on the Disability Support Services Bill includes a number of amendments responding to feedback from the disability community.

"It was important this Bill went through a Select Committee process so submitters could have their say," Disability Issues Minister Louise Upston says.

"More than 3,000 people made submissions, and I thank the Select Committee for its considered approach in ensuring those voices could help inform the Bill. As a result of its recommendations, we can confirm a number of changes.

"These include:

- Making the overall intent of the Bill in representing the current state of Disability Support Services clearer. This includes providing clarity about the role of families, and better recognising the importance of choice, safety and dignity.

- The Bill now explicitly makes it clear that the Government, through DSS, will continue to support families by contributing to care for disabled people. No additional expectations will be placed on families.
- The revised Bill makes it clear that disabled people will have a stronger voice in future decisions. The Bill explicitly requires formal consultation through disabled people's representative organisations on future Support Programmes.
- Addressing concerns around the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Enabling Good Lives, changes to the Bill will now reflect the language of the UNCRPD and the EGL principles. This includes choice, safety, dignity and a requirement for consultation ahead of decision-making.

"As Minister, I acknowledge the intent of the Bill was not as clear as it should have been. The Select Committee has heard this, and I agree with their recommended changes.

"This Bill remains very important because until now, there has been no legal framework around Disability Support Services. Feedback on the Bill was clear that people understood the need for clear foundations and a framework for how DSS operates.

"This Bill brings DSS into line with other areas of Government policy where there are existing legislative

frameworks and the ability to review these already in place.

"The Bill reflects the way DSS already works. It does not change current eligibility, entitlements or support, or introduce income or asset testing where it is not currently used.

"It will improve consistency, fairness, transparency and sustainability, building on our work after the 2024 Independent Review.

"Over the past two years our Government has taken urgent action to introduce a nationally consistent assessment process, stabilise its services, improve its financial sustainability, and give people more choice and control over flexible funding.

"We have also committed to \$2.1 billion in additional funding through successive budgets which means DSS now has more ongoing funding to support disabled people than ever before. There are more improvements needed and we will soon be consulting on a carers' package," Louise Upston says.

Other important information:

- Passage of this Bill will not affect two successful claims determined by the Supreme Court in December, which found two people being paid to

provide care to a family member were employees of the state.

- DSS currently supports around 55,000 disabled people in the community and residential care, and around 100,000 people who access environmental support services products to live safely and independently.
- It also funds Child Development Services for around 26,000 disabled children each year to support them in reaching developmental milestones.

Relevant link

- www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/improving-dss/dss-bill
or shortened URL:
<https://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/dss-bill>

End of Disability community informs improvements to DSS Bill