

Transcript

2 December 2025

DSS Provider Quality Forum: Meet the People for Us Peer Workers

Forum introduction

[Angela Desmarais]

Kia ora koutou. Welcome to our fifth provider quality forum. The topic today is an introduction to some of the People for Us peer workers.

I will start us with an opening karakia, and then I'll talk through some housekeeping and then pass over to the speakers for the day.

[Opening Karakia]

Kia hora te marino

Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana

Hei huarahi mā tātou i te rangi nei

Aroha atu

Aroha mai

Tātou i ā tātou katoa

Hui ē!

Tāiki ē!

[Angela Desmarais]

Kia ora Koutou. Hotu hotu ana taku manawa ki te whanganui-a-hei, nō Tamaki Makaurau ahau, kei Ōtautahi e noho ana, ko Angela Desmarais tōku ingoa [Māori greeting]. Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Angela Desmarais. I'm a Principal Advisor in the Quality Improvement team here at DSS.

Previously, these forums were facilitated by Jacinda, the manager of our Quality Assurance team. I'll be facilitating them going forward, and I want to say a big thank you to Jacinda for your work on the past forums.

Some housekeeping for today – all attendees will have cameras and microphones turned off on entry, you cannot turn these on yourselves, but there will be opportunities for questions and answers at the end of the session.

If you choose to ask a verbal question, use the raise hand function in Teams. We will unmute you and turn your camera sharing on. You'll also need to turn on your microphone and camera on your end as well. But we will deal with that closer to the Q&A section. We will also have written questions available throughout the presentation that we will group together and then answer at the end in the question-and-answer time.

The way to do that is through the Q&A function. You'll find that button on your Teams screen next to where you would usually find the chat button. We have disabled the chat today so there's only the one Q&A function available.

The way that works is very similar to chat. If you click on the Q&A function, you should have a panel down the right-hand side of your team's screen. Make sure that it's got 'ask a question' next to your name though, that it says that in the window.

If it doesn't, just click on the drop-down menu next to your name and select Ask a question as the format. You may see other people's written questions pop up as they enter them into the Q&A function.

If someone has already asked the question that you wanted to ask, you don't need to write it again. Instead, you can support that question by using the vote up arrow. So that's a little arrow just next to people's questions.

It's kind of a bit like a thumbs up 'like' and this is quite helpful because the questions can be responded to an order of how many have the most up votes.

We'll try and get through as many questions as possible during the session. These will be read out by one of our staff here in the DSS Quality Improvement team and we will change between written questions and questions from the Q&A function. But anyone else that wants to raise their hand to ask a verbal question can do that by clicking the raise hand button.

A reminder that the session is being recorded, so we will be posting the recording of the forum on our DSS website after the event, along with a transcription of the content.

I just want to also acknowledge that we have two New Zealand sign language interpreters here today. They will take turns to interpret the speakers in this forum. So please, please try to speak clearly and especially when saying names so that the interpreters can follow. If people are speaking too quickly, the interpreter may just ask us to slow down.

Before I pass over to the first speaker, I'd just like to acknowledge that tomorrow is the 3rd of December, which is International Day of Persons with Disabilities and this year's theme is 'fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress', and that links in quite closely to equitable employment for disabled people, which is

something that certainly fosters inclusive societies. So, it's wonderful timing to hear from disabled people today about the important work they're doing. Now introducing our forum topic today is I think Kelly or Richard from People First.

They will give you an introduction to the topic, explaining what People for Us is, how it came about, a little bit about peer workers, so who we will hear from directly afterwards.

People for Us introduction

[Richard Buchanan]

Kia ora koutou, ko Richard Buchanan toku ingoa. Thank you, Kelly Woolston and I are just going to give you a brief overview of People for Us.

People for Us is a peer visiting service who visits disabled adults and tāngata whaikaha Māori who live in homes funded by Disability Support Services to find out three key things.

First is whether they are living their good life. Secondly whether they are getting good support. Thirdly whether they are safe and feel safe.

[Kelly Woolston]

Kia ora koutou. Ko Kelly Woolston toku ingoa. Why has People for Us been created?

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care found that people with disabilities were abused while living in residential care. People for Us was created to make sure that disabled people are safe and get good support. The Royal Commission said that more needs to be done to stop the abuse of disabled people in care, and People for Us will focus on the human rights of disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori.

Our role, Richard and I are part of the regional management team at People First, People for Us, but we are lucky to have two partners alongside us in our work in the Auckland and Waikato regions. That's Te Ahi Kaa, who visit tangata whaikaha Māori in Waikato and South Auckland, and Vaka Tautua which visits Auckland's Pacific communities.

[Richard Buchanan]

There are three key outcomes of the People for Us service. The first one is that Disability Support Services will gain an understanding of the voices and experiences of disabled people tāngata whaikaha Māori within the services they procure as well as the voices and experiences of families and whānau). Secondly, issues of safety and wellbeing for this group of disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori visited

by Kaiārahi, or peer worker, are identified and responded to at an early stage, rather than too late. Thirdly, Disability Support Providers deliver safer services that are aligned with the Enabling Good Lives vision and principles.

Just to finish, this is a photo of a recent gathering of all three partners, where we came together for training and meeting the tutors.

Presenters

[Angela Desmarais]

Wonderful, thank you both, Richard and Kelly. That's a great photo seeing everyone come together. We'll be introducing now our first speaker who is David King from People First. Welcome David.

David will be talking a little bit about their work.

[David King]

Kia Ora, my name is David King. I'm in a Peer Worker for People for Us in Otago. About me, I grew up here in Dunedin. I have a disability, I love animals and do rugby. I was a full-time career for my dad and then later for my mom.

I have been involved in People First for 15 years as a Dunedin member, regional president, and national chairperson. I have been involved in DPA, I am on the Committee of DPA. I'm with Your Way Kia Roha and now I'm on the leadership team.

I also have many years of experience working for CCT (Community Care Trust) quality checkers. We work with DAA (Designated Auditing Agency) every couple of years to audit and support houses, how they are going, for Ministry of Health.

My role was to visit people in their homes and see if they were happy with their lives. A highlight of my career has been working with Sir Robert Martin. In 2008, I travelled overseas with Sir Robert visiting People First groups in Scotland and Wales, and it was brilliant. I went to New York, where we both presented at the United Nations building. Working along with Sir Robert has inspired me to carry on and work hard to make sure everyone's voice is heard.

Why I wanted to do this role? I want to help other disabled people in the community. I have lots of local contacts in my community that I want to share with others. I want to help people have better lives with less barriers.

The Training. I was lucky enough to be asked to be on the advisory group to guide the Donald Beasley Institute, where they were setting up their training. In the training, we learned about the UN, about the Treaty of Waitangi, different ways that people can use their communication, and how we can work together with both parties – People getting their support and people giving their support.

What it is like being a peer support worker? You learn that every house is different. You learn that everyone has different needs, it's good to be open minded to get to know people and reassure meeting other disabled people and hearing about their lives. It is good to be able to go with the flow. An experience, an example of this, was one of our first visits in a group house. We were presenting ice breakers, and a short presentation.

When we arrived, we could see that people living there had a very high needs and don't communicate verbally. This was not what we were expecting, and our plans went out of the window, and we needed just go with the flow and take time to get to know everybody in the building.

This work is so important, and everyone deserves to have a bigger voice in their own lives. Thank you very much.

[Angela Desmarais]

Wonderful. Thank you, David. You certainly have some valuable insights from your governance experience that you bring to your job, so thank you. Next speaker is James Carr from People First. James will now talk to us about their work.

[James Carr]

Kia ora, my name is James. I'm one of six peer workers and I first started back in July this year. What I learnt from the training on the training we did down in Dunedin with Donald Beasley Institute is I learned how to communicate with people that are in residential homes [technical difficulties].

[Angela Desmarais]

Would you like us to move to another speaker so you can take a moment [to resolve the technical issue]. That's no problem at all. Natasha, how do you feel about starting your talk now, are you OK with that?

[Natasha Brown]

So ready.

[Angela Desmarais]

We will go to Natasha Brown, also from People First, to hear about their work and then we will come back and see if James would like to join us.

[Natasha Brown]

Kia ora everyone. I'm Natasha Brown, based in Hamilton on the Waikato. I am one of the peer workers that are employed by People First People for Us team. I'm also one

of the peer workers that was first employed to be part of the initial pilot team with People First People for Us. Kelly, my regional manager, believing in me and my skills when other people have not in the past has been everything to me.

One other person that we all know and that believed in me also, that was Sir Robert Martin. He told me once to keep up with my People First work and he believed me like Kelly believes in me now. All my life I have wanted to help and advocate for other people with disabilities and now I finally can. People First and providers has given me that opportunity and I'm glad to be able to share with you today.

We were trained by Donald Beasley Institute, and it was a great experience. Having people feel the same way as I do and then be able to make a difference is important to me. When we finished the training, we were sent our certificates, which I'm very proud of. The training leader also wrote in the card, and she said "I hear you're doing a great job of it, which is no surprise of all, Natasha. What can we say? You're a natural social justice warrior. Your energy for and commitment to this role are second to none. This training has just given you the tools to do what you have been working toward for a long time. Your passion for advocacy is so obvious and we know people's rights will always be upheld when you're around".

This role has made a huge difference to my life and now I have a job, and I have wanted since I was 18 years old. I know what I do helps change lives.

Because I have a disability, I'm able to connect to the people we visit. I have similar experiences with self-confidence and not having friends in the past and being lonely has also been a key in situations. I have now got to visit quite a few people and we're working together to grow their voice.

The people we have visited so far have chosen where we visit them at a time and place that suits them. I can now see that as soon as I visit them, and I say I have a disability; they relax and open up and are so comfortable. I noticed people talk about how they feel, and they ask me how I grew my confidence, and they want to grow it too. When I revisit people, they really like that they know us and open way more. Lots of people have not wanted us to leave.

I'm looking forward to us to do more and more and grow people's voices. I know we are going to make so much of a difference. I really like making sure people feel safe, and are getting good support, that is important to all of us.

People also notice that I have a job and where I have come from in the past and people really want to do that also. People really want friendships and to grow confidence and to be able to speak to staff and whanau about how they feel. I look forward in assisting people to do this and connecting people to Speaking Up courses through People First, and others, to assist this.

Lots of people we visit want more friends and I'm working hard to link people with places they can meet more people other than the residential service they live in. I have linked people to friendship groups, People First groups and other local groups and Speaking Up courses.

These things have also helped me in the past and to be who I am today. Having faith in myself has been hard but getting the offer and seeing the word 'permanent' in black and white, in the e-mail saying I got the job, it was the best feeling, and I don't even know how I express it.

Knowing how much of a difference I can make by being able to give people a voice and seeing they feel safe and happy is everything to me. Knowing also I have been through similar things and I can relate, that makes it worthwhile. Being able to let disabled people know about courses that helps build confidence, or even the friendship programmes that they can join, means the world to me also.

The connection between Kaiāwhina and Kaiarahi makes a big difference to our work. Once my Kaiāwhina commented that it's like two sides of the same coin and that we do the same job from different perspective, but both are important and that's how I feel too. We work together and learn together and share the things we learn with the people.

I hope you all here assist the people you support to visit with us as I really think it will make a difference. Thank you everyone and thank you for listening to me.

[Angela Desmarais]

Ka rawe, awesome. Thanks for that, Natasha. James, are you okay to go next?

[James Carr]

Yep

[Angela Desmarais]

Awesome, welcome back [technical fix].

[James Carr]

Kia ora. My name is James Carr. I'm one of six Kaiarahi peer workers working for People for Us. I am one of the six original pilot team of Kaiarahi and I work alongside Hayden, my Kaiāwhina peer assistant.

I have been with People First since 2013. My previous experience is Central Region President on the People First National Committee, Vice President for People First Central Region, as well as being a person who has lived experience with a learning

disability, has prepared me greatly for the role and gives me the drive for the work ahead.

In July, I went down to Dunedin for training with the Donald Beasley Institute. What I learned from the training with DBI was how to work with disabled people in residential care homes and how to communicate some of the topics that would come up during our conversations.

The training covered multiple topics, including the Treaty of Waitangi, the History on Disability, the UNCRPD, supported decision making, communication, privacy and confidentiality, and self-care. Since then, we've had our induction into the role and have covered the visiting process, referral pathways, reporting and debriefing, and tips for guided conversations.

I have completed 6 residential visits so far and gained a lot of experience from these. I learned how to adapt the pathways that we learned during the training. Mainly with our first referral pathway, teaching self-advocacy and options for them to have a better life.

So far, we have had a positive response from the visits that we have made, as the people we have invested in are safe and living their best lives. I have really enjoyed the work since I started.

Currently we are networking to spread the word about people for us. We are meeting with different community groups and providers to see if people in residential services are living a safe life. Thank you.

[Angela Desmarais]

Great, thanks for that James. Awesome work. And now our next speaker is Ray Faleafa from Vaka Tautua. We'll just pause a moment and switch interpreters and then invite Ray.

[Ray Falaefa]

Mālō e lelei family (Tongan greeting). My name is Ray Faleafa and I'm a peer support worker in our new People for Us service here at Vaka Tautua. We are a for-Pasifika by-Pasifika community health, disability and social services provider, serving families across Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago.

As peer support with my own lived experiences of not only caring for different family members with various disabilities but also living with a learning disability of my own brought on by a stroke as a child. So, I am blessed to be able to serve our Pasifika communities. Through my own personal experiences of disability, it has been hard. No, it's been really difficult. In fact, no, it's been nigh on impossible to access the help and support needed to take care of my loved ones and family.

Part of it was the perceived stigmas around disabilities. You know, family must have done something in the past to deserve it, or karma coming back to hit the family, and the shame and embarrassment that comes with it, and another part of it is pride, not wanting to reach out for help as it shows weakness – where people with disabilities are still viewed with shame and embarrassment.

Part of it also is, as Pasifika, we are used to living surrounded by friends and family, where the village would look after the village., but that dynamic doesn't really exist nowadays, especially here in New Zealand. And adding on to this, I guess the main reason why we found it hard to care for our loved ones was our lack of knowledge and the inability of the professionals whom we put our trust in to point us in the right direction.

You know, even what to do next was hard to get. My recent experiences with Dad, who passed away earlier this year in April, highlighted my frustrations, where I honestly felt ripped off by the system. We stumbled along with supporting dad from home that we were really struggling. You know, we got the run around from dad's GP, we were told he was the one that we're meant to go through, but he wasn't much help, and that happened for a good couple of years, and it wasn't until dad had a stroke at home in January this year, where dad was rushed to the hospital, I had to plead with the nurses, with the doctors, the staff at the hospital to get any type of support for Dad. Somehow, we stumbled along and got Dad into a hospital level care facility in February.

Dad passed away in April this year, April 24th this year, which really makes me feel, you know, some sort of negative way, which is putting it mildly. Even though I was dad's welfare garden, dad's home dictated how dad's cares went, and in some cases we didn't agree. But you know, we didn't know nothing about the system. So we were just thankful Dad was in a facility to give him the cares that he needed and deserved.

We as a family felt we were not properly informed of what was happening with Dad. With today, we still haven't received an official diagnosis for Dad, even though we were told by numerous doctors and experts, you know, that Dad had dementia, which made it hard for us to access support.

I am blessed in this space to be peer support for People for Us, because I don't want anybody to experience that kind of system helplessness like we did. From the start, when I started with People for Us in May, just finding out that we do have rights. The Health and Disability Code of Rights, our EGL, I didn't even know that. It's not common knowledge. Even our rights in the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – didn't even know that – so we end up getting these people who we put our trust in to help us, but they're not.

Since my journey here as a peer support, we've learnt a lot. We've learnt how to engage with different tagata sa'ilimalo (Pacific disabled people, their whānau and carers). So, tagata sa'ilimalo is a Samoan term. It means people pursuing success and ultimately that's what we're trying to do with our disabilities. We want them to live their best lives the way they want and how they want.

Based off my experiences of Dad, I'm blessed to be able to help our people. So yeah, thank you family, and have a good day.

[Angela Desmarais]

Awesome. Thanks, Ray and good to hear on how you can draw on those experiences to bring your knowledge and awareness to the community. Thanks, Ray. And next we have Saini Schwenke from also from Vaka Tautua.

[Saini Schwenke]

Hi everyone, talofa everyone and warm Pacific greetings. My name is Saini and I'm a proud Samoan woman and also I work as a peer worker for People for Us.

I also bring that experience. I also live with Asperger's, which is a big part of my story and how I see the world. When I think about this theme, I think about my journey as a Samoan, as a mother, and someone who is learning to embrace her difference and turn it into strength. Having Asperger's means I see and experience things a bit differently. Sometimes that can be hard but I also see it as a strength.

Then there's leadership. In my role as a peer worker, I work alongside others who have lived experience. Leadership for me isn't about being in front, but it's about walking together and being able to listen to them and also helping them or uplift them and encourage them.

Within People for Us we believe that our voices, our experiences, and our leadership matter. An example of that is when we go and see tagata sa'ilimalo, they will need us to help them, empower them, to live the good quality of life and also enabling them to live the quality of life and giving them the rights to make their own decisions. To me, that's what inclusion and true leadership are about. So we all have a role, some lead from the front, some lead from behind, and every person matters.

As a mom, I think about my son. I wanted to grow up where inclusion isn't just talked about, but it's lived. So, when I said I want to elaborate more on that, I want people out there to know that their voices matter – where people with disabilities are seen, heard and respected, where our Pacifica values and our differences can walk hand in hand. So people with disabilities should never be discriminated. They all have a voice, they should be included, and they have the rights to live a good quality of life like anyone else does.

Within my role as a peer worker, I'm learning a lot in my role. I do struggle in areas, but I'm learning to be – my main skill is to be more confident – and this is helping with public speaking with others as well.

I'm blessed as well to be in this role. Blessed to help others wherever is needed, so I'd like to thank you all for listening and God bless everyone here. Thank you.

[Angela Desmarais]

Thank you, Saini. That was great. Loved hearing that framing of leadership. Thank you. And our last speaker for this session is Jessica Nelson from Te Ahi Kaa. We'll hear Jessica talking about their work. Welcome, Jess.

[Jessica Nelson]

Kia ora everyone, my name's Jessica Nelson. So I work for Te Ahi Kaa. I've only just started at Te Ahi Kaa since August this year. I have just, obviously I'm starting as a Kaiarahi in peer support, so this is my first time being in this sector. I actually come from hospitality, so I have a hospitality background and I'm used to speaking and talking to people but this is very new in regard to speaking on Zoom and everything. However personally, I have actually enjoyed working alongside my team so far in this industry. It's taught me confidence.

There has been a bit of struggle within myself actually, but I'm slowly getting there. It's family as well as work, but as Peer Support worker I'm actually enjoying it.

I'm probably not gonna speak as long as everyone else, just cause this is very new, but a bit about me is I live in Pukekohe in Auckland, I am whangai (raised by whānau) right from when I was two weeks old, and I have Fetal Alcohol syndrome as well, but I've slowly come out of that due to a lot of work that was put into me when I was younger.

I have really had ups and downs in my life, being the youngest of six too. I've really struggled at school due to my Fetal Alcohol Disorder (FASD). That's pretty much me, I hope everyone has a good day.

Questions and Answers

[Angela Desmarais]

Awesome. Thank you, Jessica. That that was great, you did really well. Great to hear about your journey and that you're now a peer worker along with our other speakers. It's wonderful having you all together for this forum.

So now we'll sort out some spotlighting of our speakers today, of David, James, Natasha, Ray, Saini and Jessica, and we'll start the Q&A session. Just a reminder that

you can either select the raise hand function to verbally ask a question or you can select Q&A to enter a written question.

It looks like we'll get going there, and I'd like to also invite my colleague Solmaz, who will be reading out the questions for our panel today, so welcome Solmaz.

[Solmaz Nazari]

Thank you. Kia ora koutou. I am Solmaz Nazari. I am Senior Advisor in the Quality Improvement team in DSS. Very nice to see you all. And thank you for the kōrero, I really enjoyed listening to your kōrero and learning from your mahi.

So, for the first question we have in the Q&A function chats, Aimee asked, of the homes that have already been visited by People For Us, how were they selected? Did people directly ask for the visit, or an organisation, or were they randomly visited? Who wants to answer the question, one of the managers or one of the peer workers?

[Kelly Woolston]

It's come in a multiple of ways. Obviously, we've received referrals from people just on our website or that have contacted us wanting a visit. Natasha, you may want to talk too about all the places that you've gone to visit people, at groups, or disability leadership groups within providers, different organizations. Providers have been fantastic about getting us along to self-advocacy groups or leadership groups in different places where people have said that they really would like a visit as well, so sometimes we approach through that way.

We also have approached organizations to see if people would like an opportunity to visit and many people have come forward for that. So it is really in each region we focus on that, but we even got some referrals from attending the IDEA Services kapa haka group and people came up to us there, to Te Ahi Kaa, and other places wanting that as well. And yeah, so we go around different places, but also people approach us, and family members have come to us, or sometimes we've even received referrals from one provider about another provider, about people there in a multiple of ways.

[Solmaz Nazari]

Thank you so much, thank you. And the second question is from John Taylor. Thank you everyone for introducing yourselves and what you do. What do you think are the most important things for you to look out for when you are visiting houses?

[Saji Varghese]

Thank you, I'm Saji from People First People for Us service. What are we looking for? We are looking to hear from the person who is living in the residential service how

their life is. We're not assuming that life is not good. So we are inquiring how good their life is, how safe they feel in the place where they are living, are their voices being heard, are they getting a quality service. Those are the themes which came out of the Royal Commission's inquiry that disabled people spoke about.

So we have got very wonderful, you know, guided questions which is led by the peer workers who speak to them and intention is to find out by those questions and by that kōrero that their voices are heard.

John, if that answers your question, what are the most important thing we are looking for? Yes, they're looking for safety, quality, and are they living a good life? That's the three themes which we're looking for.

[Natasha Brown]

Kia ora koutou everyone. I've done a few visits myself and I have noticed a few things. I kind of noticed, say, if any person may have injuries on themselves, that's one thing we do look out for. Are they happy where they're living. There could be maybe locks on cupboards, so we definitely have a look, see if they feel safe.

We do have the guided questions which Saji just speak about and it's about if you have a good life. Any relationships that are important to you. Safety – do you feel safe where you're living. Do you feel safe in, like, out in your community. How about the support you get – are you happy with the support that you get from the service that you're provided. Are you happy with the choices or having control over your life.

So I have them on little cue cards and I ask some questions and yeah, that's what we kind of look out for.

[David King]

I was the one of the people on the pilot program for six months and I got the confirmed I got full term role. Body language – look around the house, make sure their personal stuff is around. How much choice they have got in their lives in the house. Communication – that they are happy where they live. They are happy with the people they live with, because sometimes they don't have a voice on who wants to live with things. So sometimes their voice is not heard on who is flatting with them. And abuse – you pick up that, sometimes, you can feel if things are not right or if things are right, because with us having lived experience of being abused, or being knocked around, with no rights, we can pick up more easily the good points and the bad points.

[Ray Falaefa]

I was just gonna add on to that answer. You know, we've been talking here what to look out for when we go to our visits. As well as the things that have been brought up, we've been told to keep an eye out of like the physical surroundings in the actual residence. You know, how does it look, is it clean, I mean, is it dishevelled, things like that. Also what we've been talking about here is, the interactions of the tagata sa'ilimalo and their support worker, you know sometimes you can see with that interaction how things are with them, does tagata sa'ilimalo look scared when they're interacting with their support worker and things like that, You know, are they constantly flinching or are they looking down, do they visually look scared when they're around their support worker, so that's some of the things that we've talked about. Thank you.

[Solmaz Nazari]

So the next question is thanking all of you for your awesome presentation and amazing mahi. They ask, following the kōrero about not being aware of rights and EGL principles, if there are any thoughts from any of the peer workers of ways we can make sure our community and whānau know their rights?

[Natasha Brown]

Hi, as I was saying in my speech, there is People First that you can join. People First is arranged of the whole of like New Zealand. They can help with Speaking Up courses, they help you with self-confidence, so there's lots of different ways to be, and People First groups around can also help you out with, like, teach about your rights as well. So yeah, it's quite big there.

[David King]

One way is DPA. Another group that will help anyone with a learning disability with issues and we talk to the Government about issues. Enabling Good Lives support them to think outside from houses to streamline in community services like, to be part of a community outside., so we like, instead of saying stay in your house and do nothing, which is a bit scary for some people, what is our community we can support you with, to be streamlined, so that you would be a part of community outside of the house.

This is where the things is not that flash with the system, so we try to talk to them, ask what you want from your life, if you want something outside of your support house, then we support you, to find, organise, a community to support you to do things in the community.

So, Enabling Good Lives is part of our thinking always of getting people out of the thinking and going a different thinking, some way thinking differently outside of the

box in community. So very important to give them little hints and a little push that there is more to life, way of living.

[Saini Schwenke]

I think for me would be the rights for people is Enabling Good Lives, so that's what I've learned in our People for Us team, enabling good lives, enabling them, making sure that they live the best quality of life because we give them supported decision making on their rights, based on their rights, to make their own choices. So it's based on choice and control and that they are understood and that their needs are met as well, so that's what we're here for – here as peer workers – we're here to make sure that their needs are met and for their choice and control over their life.

[Solmaz Nazari]

Mindful of time, I see you wanted to say something, you've had your hand up.

[Hayley Te Ao]

Kia ora mai tatou. Actually, Saini put it perfectly, she took the words out of my mouth, so kia ora for that Saini.

[Solmaz Nazari]

Thank you so much and Angela, do we have time for me to read another question?

[Angela Desmarais]

Not quite, we are on four o'clock but was the question about how to become a peer worker? Because I'm seeing in the Q&A there's a couple of questions there around what opportunities there could be in the future for becoming a peer worker. We'll be giving you, in the closing slide, some contact details for People for Us and other organisations, so maybe if that is something that you're interested in finding out more about, you could reach out to either the organisations that have been represented here today, or us in the quality team, and we'll share those contact details with you because just mindful of time.

I just want to say thank you so much to Solmaz for facilitating those questions. It's been great hearing from you, our Senior Advisor in the in the Quality Improvement team here at DSS. We'll wrap up the session now.

Wonderful, truly wonderful having all our presenters here today, and also thank you to our DSS colleagues in the background helping make this forum happen.

A huge thank you to Kelly and Richard from People First for the introduction, to our speakers David, James and Natasha from People First, Ray and Saini from Vaka

Tautua and Jessica from Te Ahi Kaa for sharing their experiences of being peer workers at People for Us – thank you.

We're about to put up the closing slide for the forum, which has those contact details I mentioned, that you can reach out to, including quality@msd.govt.nz.

Now, if you want to come back and review this forum or have a look at the transcript, or if you know of any other people who missed today's session, please direct them through to the DSS website because we do post the link to this recording once we've written up the transcription. This is helpful for people who prefer to read the forum content rather than watch it.

So, it's been a pleasure having you all here this afternoon for this fifth forum. I think we got up to, I didn't quite get the number there. I think it was about – a lot – I think over 100, which is excellent. If you do have any questions, the details are on the contact slide and will be included with the transcript or contact us here at Quality.

I'll close now with a karakia whakamutunga, closing karakia, and hope you all have a wonderful rest of your day and also a reflective day tomorrow as we observe International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

[Closing Karakia]

Kia whakairia te tapu
Kia wātea ai te ara
Kia turuki whakataka ai
Kia turuki whakataka ai
Haume e
Hui ē!
Tāiki ē!

Closing slide

Contact details

- People for Us: www.peopleforus.org.nz
- People First: www.peoplefirst.org.nz
- Vaka Tautua: www.vakatautua.co.nz
- Te Ahi Kaa: www.teahikaa.co.nz
- DSS Quality Assurance and Improvement Team: quality@msd.govt.nz