

DPO Coalition Key Messages – October 2024

This set of Key Messages covers our DPO Coalition meeting in October 2024.

Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People

The Coalition met with Paula Tesoriero (Chief Executive), Ben O'Meara (Deputy Chief Executive) and Carole Lillico (Manager, Partnerships and Voice). We discussed the future of Whaikaha as a standalone population ministry and what that might mean for disabled people. We also discussed approaches to continued engagement and relationship building.

The Coalition had an additional session with Ben O'Meara, Carole Lillico, Dr Anna McMartin (Principal Advisor) and Nigel Mehta-Wilson (Principal Advisor). The topic for discussion was stewardship. We discussed the mandate that exists under the UNCRPD (such as Articles 4.3 and 33) which states that the Government is required to work with the Coalition and others to progressively realise the rights of disabled people. We re-emphasised to officials that Whaikaha's future work programme must be aligned with what disabled people need. We look forward to working with Whaikaha on this in 2025.

The Disability Support Services Taskforce – Ministry of Social Development (MSD)

The Coalition met with Chris Bunny (Deputy Chief Executive DSS), Kat Norman (Comms and Engagement Lead), and Grace Campbell-Macdonald (Taskforce Lead for Policy and Data). As well as being the overall head of day-to-day

operations for DSS, Chris Bunny also heads the Taskforce that is leading further work on the disability system.

This was our first meeting with the Taskforce and it went well. The Coalition looks forward to engaging more fully around the issues in Phase 2, which is about the proposals for a standalone Ministry of Disabled People. From 25 October, the Taskforce will have a webpage where people can subscribe to newsletters on progress and next steps. The most recent newsletter is included here: <https://tinyurl.com/49jb49me>

Donald Beasley Institute

The Coalition met with Brigit Mirfin-Veitch (Director) and Umi Asaka (Research Lead). We focussed on the considerable work that has happened over the past three years, gathering information on the progressive realisation of disabled people's human rights with respect to supports and services. Timing for the release of several smaller reports is being worked through. We look forward to continuing our work with the Donald Beasley Institute which includes identifying our next cycle of monitoring. We are pleased to share that the Donald Beasley Institute is contracted to work with us for the next three years.

Sonja Eriksen, Principal Disability Advisor, Ministry of Social Development (MSD)

We discussed the Accessibility Charter, confirming that it remains a live document. Sonja told us that government agencies are still attending the accessibility training in relatively high numbers which is very positive. Sonja also clarified that disability allowance criteria have not changed, and that if an expense item fits within the criteria today, it will continue to fit for the foreseeable future.

Voice of disabled people

The DPO Coalition is the first place that the Government goes to when wanting to engage with the voice of disabled people. We are continually looking for new member organisations to join the DPO Coalition to increase our coverage across the disability community. New members must represent disabled people who are not already represented by an existing member. If you would like to apply, please email the Secretariat at: us-dpo@groups.io