

DPO Coalition Key Messages - June 2024

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

Minister for Disability Issues, Hon. Louise Upston

We met with the Minister for Disability Issues and discussed a number of topics. She talked about the work ahead and her intention to be realistic about what is achievable. Amongst the items on her workplan she is focussing on the sustainability of Whaikaha and the need to deliver certainty, consistency, fairness and stability for Disability Support Services.

With respect to the Review of Disability Support Services, the Minister clarified that there are two parts:

- making sure that measures are sustainable to ensure Whaikaha can live within its budget; and
- being clear what the medium to long term challenges are that must be addressed.

Additional topics the DPO Coalition discussed with the Minister include:

- Accessibility Legislation acknowledging it is unlikely this will be progressed during the next two years. The significant challenges there are around accessibility were acknowledged.
- The Minister's interest in creating a short set of issues that can be realistically achieved in the short term.
- Ensuring disabled people who can work are supported in their employment.

- Considering the establishment of a Disability Ministerial Group to work with the Minister on disability issues.
- Education – the Minister reinforced that disabled children have the right to life-long education and that she has no tolerance for disabled children and | or students being excluded from school. Increasing attendance is an important lever towards addressing some of the challenges.

The DPO Coalition appreciated the honesty and frankness of our first full meeting with the Minister. It was a productive meeting. The DPO Coalition looks forward to our next meeting with the Minister, to discuss issues of significance that have arisen since our June meeting.

Health & Disability Commission

We met with Rose Wall, Deputy Commissioner Disability, and Esther Woodbury, Principal Advisor, from the Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner. Rose Wall discussed their current work programmes including their Review of the Health and Disability Act and the Code of Rights. Esther explained that there is a need to define disability and supported decision-making in the Act. A right of appeal process is also looking to be introduced. It was noted that consultation of the Review closes on 31 July 2024.

The Commission is developing a Disability Strategy, which will include aspects such as how the Commission can respond to and support disabled people, about how accessible it is, and how knowledgeable its staff are. The Commission is also working on their cultural competency and responsiveness and how making complaints can be made easier for people.

The DPO Coalition is scheduled to meet with the Health and Disability Commission again in October 2024.

Manatū Hauora – Ministry of Health

We met with Victoria Manning, Manager, Health of Disabled People Policy, and officials from the Regulatory Assurance Team from the Ministry of Health.

We were pleased to learn that work on the Health of Disabled People Strategy will continue with the change in government.

We discussed the Contraception Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977 and sterilisation services more generally. There is a lot of work to do to modernise this Act, and address key issues related to disabled people (e.g. Ashley treatment) and the importance of accurate and complete data collection. We will continue to monitor this work and seek progress for disabled people especially with respect to bodily integrity matters.

We also discussed the Patient Portal, and officials reassured us that this work is a priority for the Ministry.

Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People

We met with Ben O'Meara, Deputy Chief Executive, Sheryl Pinckney, General Manager, and Matt Frost, Principal Advisor from the Partnerships and Stewardship team at Whaikaha. We discussed the Disability Action Plan. Whaikaha explained that agencies have been contacted about the September 2022 Concluding Observations and have been asked what they can progress over the next two years. This is in keeping with the

Minister's preference to focus on doing a small amount of things well. Whaikaha explained that the intention was for some of the longer-term Concluding Observations to be progressed as part of the refresh of the Disability Strategy, which expires in 2026. The DPO Coalition looks forward to learning more about the Concluding Observations that will be progressed during the next two years.

Ministry of Social Development

We met with Sonja Eriksen, Principal Advisor Disability from the Ministry of Social Development. Sonja explained that the Ministry has been focusing on what they can do to make sure that the experience is better for disabled clients, both in terms of responses they receive from frontline staff, and the accessibility and ease of making applications for supports. Their priority is making sure that disabled people have the same experience regardless of location or staff member.

There is work happening around the Disability Allowance to clarify eligibility criteria which can be confusing and inconsistent. We heard that there population groups or people who may qualify for the Disability Allowance but who do not identify with the term 'disability'. Fact sheets to explain what can be claimed under Disability Allowance are being worked on.

MSD has made a number of improvements in processes to booking and working with NZSL interpreters.

The DPO Coalition welcomed news of the various pieces of work happening and of the introduction of better practices. We look forward to our next meeting with MSD.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The DPO Coalition continues to work on bringing a Te Tiriti o Waitangi lens to our Charter. Te Huia Bill Hamilton is providing us with advice and assistance on our journey.

Parents/Whānau/Family Network

We met with members of the Parents/Whānau/Family Network to discuss ways of working together how we might support each other's kaupapa. We will continue to explore ways we will engage and how we share information about our work.

Mana Pasefika

We met with delegates from Mana Pasefika to discuss their application to join the DPO Coalition in more detail. While there are some areas Mana Pasefika will continue to develop as a DPO, the DPO Coalition agreed to formally invite Mana Pasefika as a full member of the DPO Coalition.

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