NZ Disability Survey 2023

Purpose and Objectives

A discussion document for the DDEWG meeting, March 2021

## Purpose of paper

The purpose of this paper is to outline a proposed statement of overarching purpose and objectives for the 2023 Disability Survey. This will be used as a starting point for consultation and discussion with key stakeholders. Following consultation, a final agreed statement of purpose and objectives will be produced that will be used to guide the content and sample design stages of development.

## Background

The first comprehensive survey on disability in New Zealand was conducted in 1996. The survey measured the nature, extent and causes of disability in New Zealand and provided information on socio-demographic characteristics of disabled people. It also provided information on unmet needs for services and support.

The survey was repeated in 2001, 2006 and 2013. Some changes to survey content and methods were made for 2013, with a greater focus placed on measuring socio-economic outcomes for disabled and non-disabled people in order to explore the extent to which disabled people are disadvantaged with regard to participation in key social activities. The rights and wellbeing of disabled people were by then considered a primary driver of the survey, alongside describing the population group and informing the provision of support services.

The next disability survey is scheduled to take place in 2023. In view of developments relating to disability, both internationally and in New Zealand, over the past decade, it is timely to review the content and methods of the survey to ensure that statistics generated are relevant to current and emerging needs, and conform with international best practice. The first stage in this process is to establish the high-level objectives of the survey.

## Need

Data from previous disability surveys has been used by a wide range of organisations to inform important reporting, policy development, monitoring, and service development for New Zealand’s disabled population. There is currently no other source of data in New Zealand that can fill all of these needs. There has been strong and on-going stakeholder and user support for a disability specific survey in New Zealand.

Since the last disability survey was run in 2013, Stats NZ has moved to include Washington Group questions on activity limitations in all three of the main household surveys – The Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS); the General Social Survey (GSS); and the Household Economic Survey (HES). This allows for more regular monitoring of differences in outcomes between the disabled and non-disabled populations, at a high level across a number of domains. While this provides useful, timely and regular reporting it does not replace the need for a standalone survey on disability in New Zealand. Some of the key data that cannot be produced from these surveys includes:

* a measure of disability prevalence in NZ
* the ability to analyse how social and economic outcomes differ across key sub-groups within the disabled population
* information on unmet needs for services and support for disabled people
* information on the barriers or facilitators to participation by disabled people in key areas of life (e.g. work, education, and recreation)

The Disability Survey provides key data to enable the monitoring of the NZ Disability strategy and to meet our reporting obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified by the NZ government in 2008. Disability is also referenced explicitly in 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, disability is identified as an important variable for data collection to allow for broader monitoring across all SDGs.

Official statistics form an important part of the evidence base needed to provide an objective picture of changes in the outcomes and experiences of disabled people. These should be nationally relevant in terms of the needs, outcomes, and experiences of disabled New Zealanders, but should also aim for international comparability where relevant and achievable.

## Disability concept

A functional understanding of disability has been used by Stats NZ since the first national disability survey in 1996. The disability survey, and approach to collection of disability data more widely by Stats NZ, has always been based on concepts embodied in international classifications. Since the 2013 Disability Survey this has meant an alignment to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) as the explicit conceptual basis for the disability survey.

Ongoing work on the screening questions that will be used for the 2023 Disability Survey will further clarify the specific questions and definition that will be used to identify disabled people.

## Purpose of the 2023 disability survey

The purpose of a regular disability survey in New Zealand is:

To understand and monitor over time the size and demographic characteristics of the disabled population, and to investigate whether the rights of disabled people are being met with regard to social and economic participation and outcomes.

The survey will achieve this by producing a relevant and comprehensive range of statistics relating to both the disabled and non-disabled population of New Zealand.

## Survey Objectives

The survey objectives are listed in priority order.

1. To understand the size of the disabled population usually resident in New Zealand and describe characteristics of that population. More specifically to:
   1. Produce reliable national estimates of the disabled population by demographic characteristics such as age group, gender and ethnicity
   2. Produce reliable national estimates of the disabled population by functional domain.
2. To understand the extent to which social and economic outcomes for disabled people differ from those for non-disabled people, and how those outcomes differ between groups within the disabled population.
3. To understand the level and type of support disabled people need to perform activities of daily living.
4. To understand what facilitates or hinders participation by disabled people in important aspects of life such as work, education, and recreation.

## Questions for consultation / feedback

1. Do you agree with the overarching purpose as laid out in this document?
2. Do you agree with the objectives listed? What is missing? What could be removed?
3. Is the priority order of the objectives correct?
4. Is there other information you would like to see in this document?