



Scan for
NZSL name

Strategic Intentions

Tauākī Whakamaunga Atu

1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence.

In essence, you are free to copy, distribute and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to the Crown and abide by the other licence terms.

To view a copy of this licence, visit creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Please note that no departmental or governmental emblem, logo or Coat of Arms may be used in any way which infringes any provision of the Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act 1981. Attribution to the Crown should be in written form and not by reproduction of any such emblem, logo or Coat of Arms.

www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/corporate-publications/strategic-intentions

Mihi

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā
whetū o te ao whaikaha, tēnei te
mihi ki a koutou katoa!

Mā te ngākau pono, mā te mahi
ngātahi, ka whakahoungia
te ao whaikaha mō ngā
whakatipuranga e haere ake nei.

E Tū tonu, kia kōkiri whakamua.

To the esteemed, the voices,
and the guiding stars of
the disability world, we
acknowledge you all.

With integrity and collaboration,
we will transform the disability
world for future generations.

Keep standing strong, advance
and drive meaningful change.

Whakataukākī

Me he aka rātā ka tipu tahi,
ka puāwai tahi kia tū kaha
I ngā hihi o Tamanuiterā.

Like the rātā vines growing
together and flourishing to
stand strong in the warmth
of the sun.

Our whakataukākī, gifted by
Tim Worrall of Ngāi Tūhoe,
tells a story to describe a core
promise the Ministry represents
– thriving futures for all of our
disabled communities. Our logo
was designed to reflect rātā
vines growing and flourishing
together.

Contents

<u>Minister's foreword</u>	<u>4</u>
----------------------------	----------

<u>Chief Executive's foreword</u>	<u>6</u>
-----------------------------------	----------

1

Introduction Tīmatanga kōrero

<u>Who we are</u>	<u>10</u>
-------------------	-----------

<u>Our strategic framework</u>	<u>11</u>
--------------------------------	-----------

<u>Our context</u>	<u>12</u>
--------------------	-----------

<u>Our stewardship functions</u>	<u>16</u>
----------------------------------	-----------

2

Our strategic direction Tō mātou ahunga rautaki

<u>Our strategic outcomes</u>	<u>20</u>
-------------------------------	-----------

<u>Accessibility</u>	<u>21</u>
----------------------	-----------

<u>Education</u>	<u>22</u>
------------------	-----------

<u>Employment</u>	<u>24</u>
-------------------	-----------

<u>Health</u>	<u>25</u>
---------------	-----------

<u>Housing</u>	<u>26</u>
----------------	-----------

<u>Justice</u>	<u>27</u>
----------------	-----------

3

How we operate as an organisation Ā mātou mahi hei rōpū

<u>Our work programme</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>How we work with others</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Our values</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>Our team</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>Measuring our performance</u>	<u>39</u>

Presented to the House of Representatives pursuant to section 39(4) of the Public Finance Act 1989.

Minister's foreword

New Zealand is an international leader on disability rights – a commitment this Government is proud to continue. As the system steward for disability issues across government, I am pleased to see the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha set out its strategic intentions to support disabled people to thrive in New Zealand.



Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Disability Issues

One in six New Zealanders is disabled. Disabled people make a significant contribution to New Zealand socially, culturally and economically, but still face barriers in daily life. With these barriers reduced, the contribution of disabled people can only grow. The everyday stories I hear from disabled people make clear that government has a key role in removing these barriers by ensuring public services work well for all New Zealanders.

Over the 2025 to 2028 period of these strategic intentions, the Ministry has undertaken to deliver important work programmes, including a refresh of the New Zealand Disability Strategy, a refresh of the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy, and the Government response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Ministry also intends to continue contributing to important cross-government priorities, including the Government Targets.

The Ministry will focus on making measurable improvements to the outcomes that are important to disabled people, including accessibility, education, employment, health, housing and justice. This will mean a strong focus on public services – but government, business and the community all have a role to play in improving the lives of disabled New Zealanders.

Through collaboration and a drive for outcomes, government can create real and meaningful change with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau.

I am satisfied the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha strategic intentions are consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.



Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Disability Issues

12 May 2025

Chief Executive's foreword

The Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha is pleased to set out our strategic intentions from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028. In our strategic intentions, we commit to our Ministry vision of disabled people thriving in New Zealand, and we show how we will achieve that vision by driving real and meaningful change with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau.

In 2024, the Government undertook an Independent Review into Disability Support Services. As part of the response to the review, Cabinet agreed the Ministry would become a standalone public service department from December 2024, with a system stewardship role for disability issues across government. Our strategic intentions lay out how we will play this stewardship role to deliver on Government priorities.



Paula Tesoriero MNZM PLY
Secretary for Disabled People and
Chief Executive
Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha

Our work is evidence informed, and we know there is much to be done. Data from the 2023 Household Disability Survey shows that one in six New Zealanders, or 17 percent, are disabled, with some populations experiencing higher rates of disability and poorer outcomes. This data also shows many disabled people continue to face barriers, leading to inequitable outcomes compared to non-disabled people. The removal of these barriers creates opportunities, not just for disabled people themselves, but for all of New Zealand.

The Ministry has six strategic outcomes: accessibility, education, employment, health, housing and justice. We are leading on several government priorities, including the New Zealand Disability Strategy, which has education, employment, health, housing and justice as its five outcome areas. Our other major work programmes are the New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Strategy refresh, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) response, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care response, the Accessibility Work Programme, work to create employment opportunities in the public service, and our Reshaping our Ministry project.

We are also supporting cross-government priorities, including the Government Targets, by providing second opinion advice, offering expertise on disability, and by brokering opportunities for disabled people to have input into public policy. At the same time, as part of our system steward function, we keep an overview of other major issues that are important to disabled people, such as transport and developments in technology.

The Ministry will continue to work with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau to drive meaningful change. Their perspectives, experiences and voices are integral to creating a better future for us all. We know that everyone has a role in improving the lives of disabled people, and we will keep building relationships across central and local government, business and industry, and the community to make change together.

Our ability to deliver our work rests on a strong and well-performing Ministry. I will continue our work embedding the Ministry's operating model to make sure we have the appropriate capability and systems to ensure our success.

I look forward to leading the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha to deliver on our strategic intentions, and our contribution to a New Zealand where disabled people thrive.

In signing this information, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on strategic intentions for the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha. This information has been prepared in accordance with section 38 and section 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.



Paula Tesoriero MNZM PLY
Secretary for Disabled People and Chief Executive
Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha

12 May 2025



1

Introduction Tīmatanga kōrero

In this section

Who we are

Our strategic framework

Our context

Our stewardship functions



Who we are

Our history

The Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha (the Ministry) was established on 1 July 2022. Our mission was to work in partnership with the disability community, Māori and the Government for a better, more independent future for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau.

Originally a departmental agency hosted by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), our dual mandate was to improve and strengthen the way disability supports are provided, and advance societal change to improve outcomes for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau.

During 2024, the Government undertook an Independent Review into Disability Support Services, which were provided by the Ministry at that time. As a result of the review, the Disability Support Services part of the Ministry was transferred to MSD.

On 1 December 2024, our Ministry moved from being a departmental agency hosted by MSD to a standalone public service department. Cabinet agreed a stewardship role for the standalone Ministry to drive change with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau.

Our strategic framework

Our vision

Disabled people thriving in New Zealand

Our purpose

Driving real and meaningful change with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau

Our strategic outcomes

We strive to reduce barriers, and improve equity between disabled and non-disabled people, in these areas:

Accessibility

Education

Employment

Health

Housing

Justice

Guiding frameworks

Our work is guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi), domestic law and international human rights responsibilities, especially the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

We promote the Enabling Good Lives principles and approach across society, drawing insights from the lived experiences of disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori, to reflect their voices and perspectives in our work.

Our context

1-in-6

New Zealanders is disabled

Disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori are diverse, with diverse experiences. The Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha is the system steward for disability issues across, and beyond, government. While there is no one way of defining disability, and some groups and communities prefer not to use the word 'disabled', the Ministry works with many groups and communities, including Deaf people and Turi Māori.

The Ministry uses the 'social model' to understand disability. Originating from the disability rights movement, the social model holds that disability is not caused by people's impairments alone but by the barriers created when society is not accessible. Society has a responsibility to remove these barriers so disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau can access things on the same basis as everyone else, make a valued contribution, and thrive.

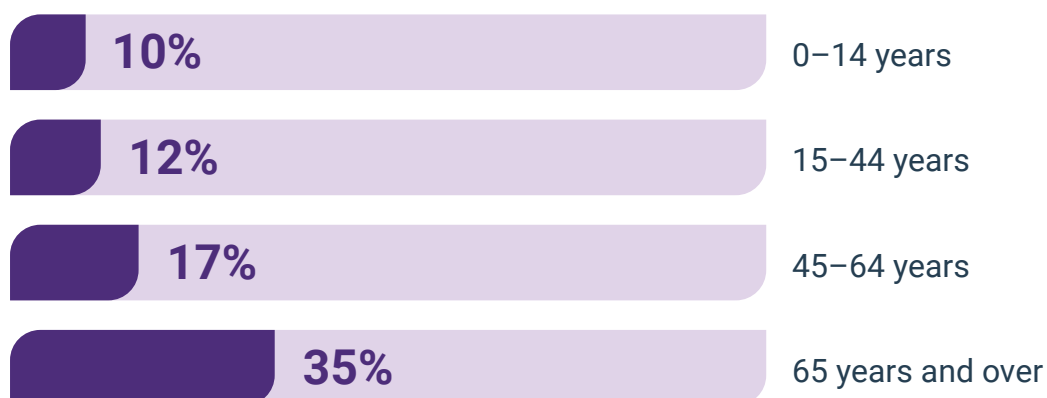
851,000 people

Data from the 2023 Household Disability Survey shows that 851,000 people, or 17 percent of the population, were disabled. Some population groups had higher disability rates than the national rate.



For example, Māori have a disability rate of 21 percent, people in Northland have a disability rate of 23 percent, and LGBTQIA+ people have a disability rate of 29 percent.

Disability rates also increase with age.



The 2023 Household Disability Survey showed 10 percent of children aged 0 to 14 years were disabled, but this rate rises steadily as people get older, to reach 35 percent for people aged 65 years and over.

People were counted as disabled if they had difficulty in one or more key aspects of human functioning (domains) identified in the survey, and their level of difficulty met a threshold for that domain. For children, the most common domains are mental health (anxiety or depression) and accepting change to their routines. For adults, the most common domains are sensory difficulties (seeing or hearing) and cognitive difficulties.

Despite many gains, disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau continue to face significant barriers in their everyday lives. For example, in the 2023 Household Disability Survey, 62 percent of disabled people had at least one unmet need for support, including half (51 percent) of disabled school students who had at least one unmet need for support at school.



These barriers mean that disabled people, particularly tāngata whaikaha Māori, continue to fare worse than non-disabled people across many aspects of their lives. For example, the 2023 Household Disability Survey shows the following.

56%

Disabled people (15–64 years)

82%

Non-disabled people (15–64 years)

48%

Māori disabled people (15–64 years)

Paid employment

56 percent of disabled people aged 15–64 years had a paid job, compared with 82 percent of non-disabled people aged 15–64.

48 percent of Māori disabled people aged 15–64 years had a paid job.

62%

Disabled adults (aged 15 and over)

94%

Non-disabled adults (aged 15 and over)

61%

Māori disabled adults (aged 15 and over)

Health

62 percent of disabled adults aged 15 and over described their health as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent', compared with 94 percent of non-disabled adults.

61 percent of Māori disabled adults aged 15 and over described their health as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'.

68%

Disabled adults (aged 15 and over)

90%

Non-disabled adults (aged 15 and over)

64%

Māori disabled adults (aged 15 and over)

Life satisfaction

68 percent of disabled adults aged 15 and over were satisfied with their lives (7 to 10 on a 0 to 10 scale) compared with 90 percent of non-disabled adults aged 15 and over.

64 percent of Māori disabled adults aged 15 and over were satisfied with their lives.



53%

Disabled people

33%

Non-disabled people

60%

Māori disabled people

Income adequacy

53 percent of disabled people lived in households with 'not enough' or 'only just enough' income to meet basic needs, compared with 33 percent of non-disabled people.

60 percent of Māori disabled people lived in households with 'not enough' or 'only just enough' income to meet basic needs.

Carers, too, are facing barriers. Compared with carers of non-disabled children, the 2023 Household Disability Survey showed that carers of disabled children were more likely to feel stressed all or most of the time, less likely to have a paid job, and much less likely to say they have enough or more than enough spare time. Some found it hard to find support to look after their child.

The ongoing barriers faced by disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau have important implications for public services, which do not always respond sufficiently to barriers, or may even create them. The New Zealand Disability Strategy is one important way the Government commits to reducing barriers and supporting disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau to thrive.

Addressing barriers creates opportunities for all of New Zealand – and more can be done to realise the untapped potential of the disabled workforce. The 2023 Household Disability Survey showed that 72 percent of disabled people aged 15 to 64 years who did not have a job would like to be employed, and identified the kinds of supports that would help them to find work. With those supports in place, more disabled people could contribute to New Zealand's economic growth.

Work in recent years means government is well-placed to help disabled people thrive. For example, a range of surveys, including by Stats NZ, have begun collecting data on disabled people. This means that, in addition to the rich data collected through the 2023 Household Disability Survey, we now have a wide range of data that allows us to compare outcomes for disabled and non-disabled people across many areas of life.

Our challenge is to turn insights into action, and working with others, turn action into better outcomes for disabled people.

New Zealand has affirmed its commitment to disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau by ratifying the UNCRPD in 2008. The Ministry's role is to act as a system steward, helping New Zealand give effect to this commitment. Through this role, we will drive real and meaningful change – ensuring disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau thrive.

Our stewardship functions

The Ministry is the system steward for disability issues across, and beyond, government. Our job is to look across different sectors, think long term, and work with others to drive real and meaningful change with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau. We have five stewardship functions, agreed by Cabinet in August 2024.

System leadership and societal change

We show leadership across government, helping agencies align their work to ensure disabled people, tāngata whaikaha and their whānau thrive. We do this through the strategic parts of our work programme, including the New Zealand Disability Strategy, the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy, and by coordinating and reporting on New Zealand's commitments under the UNCRPD.

We promote societal change by working within and beyond government – including with the community, business community, local government, iwi and hapū Māori. We take opportunities to raise the profile of disability by promoting the successes of disabled people, highlighting their contribution, and showcasing positive efforts to reduce barriers in different areas.

Strategic policy

We work across government, collaborating with agencies who develop policy settings, like those for education and health, that impact on disabled people. We contribute our knowledge to make sure the interests of disabled people are considered. We help agencies address gaps and silos in public services. Our approach to strategic policy is informed by lived experience, and a life course lens that sees disabled people's needs as holistic, diverse, culturally rich, changing over time, and requiring a joined-up response from agencies.

System-level monitoring

We keep an overview of how high-level outcomes for disabled people are tracking, and how work across government is contributing to those outcomes. This includes reporting annually on progress against the New Zealand Disability Strategy. We are working to become a key repository of high-quality disability data and evidence, and to influence and support other government agencies to better collect and use disability data and insights, including improving administrative data disability measures. This establishes a solid baseline to monitor system effectiveness and drive service improvements.

Disability information and advice

We are working to become a trusted hub of high-quality information and advice to strengthen and support community access to information about disability. With the responsibility for the Alternate Formats service having moved to the Ministry, there are greater opportunities to stabilise delivery and to build greater capacity.

Relationship building with disabled communities

We strengthen and support the relationship between government and disabled communities and facilitate opportunities for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau to contribute to key work areas across government. Through this process, we are helping government to grow capability to successfully engage with disabled communities.

We are building on a foundation of strong and enduring relationships with a range of disabled people's organisations, tāngata whaikaha Māori led rūpū, family/whānau networks, advocacy groups and disability service providers. These relationships help us to achieve our purpose, uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi), and meet New Zealand's obligations under the UNCRPD. We will continue to develop and broaden relationships, so that diverse perspectives in our community are reflected and understood.



2

Our strategic direction Tō mātou ahunga rautaki

In this section

Our strategic outcomes

Accessibility

Education

Employment

Health

Housing

Justice



Our strategic outcomes

The Ministry has six strategic outcomes that guide us in our work. These strategic outcomes reflect areas that are important to disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau. While we also keep a system steward overview of other major issues that are important to disabled people, such as transport and developments in technology, our strategic outcomes are our main focus.

We progress our strategic outcomes through work we lead, including the New Zealand Disability Strategy and the Government response to the UNCRPD. We also contribute second opinion advice and disability expertise to cross-government work programmes such as the Government Targets, which are strongly aligned with all of our strategic outcomes. We draw on the voices and experiences of disabled people as well as data and research evidence to inform decision-makers.

Our strategic outcomes relate to one another, and help us take a life course approach that sees connections between the different parts of disabled people's lives, and changes in their lives over time. For example, when accessibility is improved, it can increase a disabled person's participation in education, which in turn flows through to better employment outcomes. Going forward, we plan to increase our Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) capability to carry out research, so we can better understand where and how disabled people interact with the system over their lives, and identify areas to focus our efforts for the most impact.



Accessibility

All disabled people can access the places, services and information they need, and fully participate in their communities with ease and dignity.



Why this strategic outcome?

Being able to access places, services and information ensures disabled people can participate fully in all aspects of life. New Zealand has committed to progressively reducing accessibility barriers for disabled people under the UNCRPD. However, access barriers exist in all areas of life.¹

Disabled people are less likely than non-disabled people to live in homes that are appropriate to their needs. They are less likely to be easily able to access key public facilities like a doctor, supermarket or dairy, public park or green space. They are also less likely to be able to access public transport or private vehicles.

Disabled people are less likely than non-disabled people to be able to access the internet or cell phones. In addition, important information is not always translated into alternate formats (Braille, NZSL, Easy Read, large print and audio) – including government information. This is a particular risk in emergency situations, and means disabled people must rely on others to keep themselves safe.

Barriers to access can affect life outcomes for disabled people. For example, barriers to accessing education and healthcare can contribute to poorer employment outcomes.

Our contribution

The Ministry has an Accessibility Work Programme that involves a mix of short-term and longer-term actions. We lead work in a number of areas to improve accessibility, including the Alternate Formats service. We also work with other agencies, such as the Ministry of Transport, to embed accessibility thinking into their work programmes. We expect that actions arising from the New Zealand Disability Strategy and New Zealand Sign Language Strategy will further shape our work on accessibility.

1 Stats NZ (2020). Measuring inequality for disabled New Zealanders: 2018. Wellington, NZ: Stats NZ.



Education

Disabled people have a positive experience of schooling and tertiary education, and are supported to achieve strong educational outcomes.

Why this strategic outcome?

A good education is essential to disabled people's quality of life. Education supports the development of friendships, academic and social skills, resilience, determination and confidence. It provides a sense of belonging and identity, and prepares disabled people for life beyond education and training.

There are clear disparities in educational experiences and outcomes for disabled learners in school. Disabled learners have lower attendance, participation and achievement at school, and are less likely to continue with further education and employment. As the Education Review Office report *Thriving at School* indicated, low school attendance is too often because the school asks parents to keep their child at home. Disabled learners across all levels, and their whānau, report unmet needs; for example, learning support and reasonable accommodations. Educational disparities are often greater for tāngata whaikaha Māori learners.

Barriers to disabled learners' access and achievement in school flow on to disabled learners' experiences and outcomes in tertiary education, employment and life. However, educational data disaggregated by disability is limited, making it difficult to pinpoint the drivers and challenges for disabled learners' education.

High aspirations, investment in quality education, and reducing barriers at all levels will support disabled learners' personal, academic and social development. Better education outcomes will expand disabled people's options and ability to realise their aspirations and potential – enabling them to live rich and fulfilling lives that contribute fully to New Zealand's society, culture and economy.



Our contribution

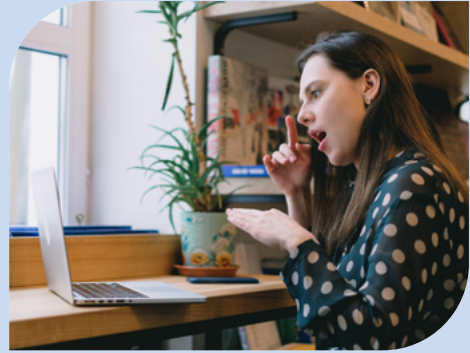
The Ministry regularly engages with education agencies on policies and programmes that affect disabled people to improve educational outcomes. Our work is aimed towards an education system that:

- eliminates barriers to enrolment and attendance for disabled children
- builds teacher, educator and system capability to better support disabled learners' engagement with the curriculum
- provides timely, responsive interventions and resources to disabled learners and their teachers and educators, to enhance access and equitable outcomes
- collects system-wide accessibility, experience and outcomes data about disabled learners to inform education strategy, policy, investment and practice decisions.



Employment

Disabled people have access to employment on an equal basis with others, in an inclusive and accessible labour market that provides them with equal remuneration for work of equal value.



Why this strategic outcome?

Employment creates financial benefits, opens opportunities, enables more choice and control in life, and provides social connections. Employment and income also directly affect other important outcomes, such as health and housing. New Zealand's disabled population represents an underutilised workforce. Improving disabled people's employment outcomes will not just benefit them, but will add significant economic and social value to society.

However, disabled people in New Zealand fare worse than non-disabled people in employment. They are much less likely to be working, earn less on average, and often face societal and systemic barriers to entering and sustaining employment. These barriers include:

- accessibility barriers in the labour market, such as physical access, and availability and knowledge of adaptive technology or other accommodations
- public transport systems that can make it difficult to commute to the workplace
- bias and discrimination, or limited understanding about employing disabled people
- barriers to education and lower qualifications, and therefore fewer ways to develop and demonstrate workforce skills
- compounding disadvantage, including for tāngata whaikaha Māori, Pacific disabled people, and people with learning (intellectual) disabilities, who are less likely to be working than other disabled people and non-disabled people.

Our contribution

The Ministry is working with the Public Service Commission on a four-point plan spanning 2024 to 2026 that will support the creation of employment opportunities in the public service for disabled people.

The Ministry regularly engages with core employment agencies on proposals that affect disabled people, and aims to influence agencies' work programmes to improve outcomes.



Health

Disabled people have the highest attainable standards of health and wellbeing.



Why this strategic outcome?

Health is one of the strongest determinants of quality of life. Multiple factors influence health and wellbeing, including publicly funded health and disability services.

Disabled people have significantly poorer health outcomes when compared with non-disabled people, across physical health, mental health and social wellbeing measures. They die earlier, suffer higher rates of comorbidities, need more emergency care, spend more time in hospital, and have far greater unmet needs for health services than their non-disabled peers. Deeper disadvantages are experienced by tāngata whaikaha Māori, Pacific disabled people, and people with learning (intellectual) disability.

The relationship between health and disability is complex, with each impacting the other in significant ways. Disabled individuals often bear a double burden where they have an increased risk of developing chronic health conditions (compared to non-disabled people) but must seek treatment in a health system that, for many disabled people, is inaccessible. Often disabled people's health is limited by systemic discrimination. This compounds the impact of a range of determinants of health, including income levels, housing conditions, employment and education.

A well-functioning healthcare system needs to recognise this compounding disadvantage, and ensure that services are inclusive, accessible and tailored to the diverse needs of disabled people.

Our contribution

The Ministry partners with other agencies and disabled people to support improvements across health services, so they are inclusive, accessible, and meet the diverse needs of disabled people. This includes supporting the Ministry of Health's ten-point work programme on the health of disabled people and contributing to key Government priorities such as primary care transformation.



Housing

All disabled people have access to, and can make choices about, suitable housing.



Why this strategic outcome?

Having secure and suitable housing protects the health and wellbeing of disabled people. Access to appropriate housing provides a sense of belonging and supports disabled people's independence. Housing directly affects other areas of life, such as health, employment and education. Improving access to suitable housing could reduce the amount of illness that disabled people experience, helping to support their education and employment outcomes. This in turn reduces the risk of someone experiencing housing instability in the future.

Disabled people fare worse in housing than non-disabled people, lacking affordable, accessible housing. Compared to non-disabled people, disabled people are more likely to:

- experience severe housing deprivation
- live in housing which is damp and mouldy
- have additional accessibility requirements in housing.

Tāngata whaikaha Māori and Pacific disabled people often experience these barriers to a greater extent because of compounding disadvantage. Disabled people in residential care experience system-based and cost barriers to move from care into social housing.

Our contribution

The Ministry is working with housing agencies to support better housing outcomes for disabled people within their work programmes, including work to reduce the number of people in emergency housing.



Justice

Disabled people can access and participate in justice services that are responsive to their needs.



Why this strategic outcome?

Interactions with the justice system can have significant impacts on the course of a person's life. Ensuring disabled people's rights are protected, that they are treated fairly under the law, and can seek legal help, is critical to their wellbeing.

Disabled people are disproportionately likely to be victims of crime. There are system and policy gaps in relation to safeguarding disabled people from abuse. There are also gaps in the knowledge and skills of the justice and family violence systems to safely respond to the abuse of disabled people.

Some research suggests disabled people are also more likely to become involved with the youth justice and adult criminal justice systems. Contributing to this are issues relating to disability responsiveness within our justice system.

A range of barriers can mean disabled people are unable, or in some cases not comfortable, seeking to resolve legal problems that affect their lives. These can include cost and information barriers, such as limited availability of information in alternate formats, and the shift to digital services, which are often not accessible.

Our contribution

We are supporting justice agencies to progress New Zealand's response to justice-related concluding observations made in 2022 by the UNCRPD.

We are also working with justice agencies and non-government organisations to embed accessible practice, including reasonable accommodations, so that disabled people are treated fairly and equally with respect for their rights.



3

How we operate as an organisation

Ā mātou mahi hei rōpū

In this section

Our work programme

How we work with others

Our values

Our team

Measuring our performance



Our work programme

The Ministry is leading a strategic work programme with seven major projects, many of which will deliver significant milestones in the next 12 to 18 months.

1 The New Zealand Disability Strategy refresh

The New Zealand Disability Strategy is required by the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022, and guides the work of government agencies on disability issues. It gives direction and purpose to activity that eliminates barriers, and supports disabled people to reach their potential and participate fully in the community.

The Ministry is working to refresh the current New Zealand Disability Strategy, which expires in 2026. The refreshed strategy will span five years and will include actions in five priority outcome areas: education, employment, health, housing and justice. It will also include the cross-cutting considerations of data, equity and accessibility. The New Zealand Disability Strategy will be launched in late 2025. The Ministry will continue to lead annual reporting to Parliament on progress against the strategy.

The Ministry's work on the New Zealand Disability Strategy contributes to all of our strategic outcomes: accessibility, education, employment, health, housing and justice.

2 The New Zealand Sign Language Strategy refresh

The New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Strategy guides work by the NZSL Board to maintain and promote the use of NZSL by Deaf people, Turi Māori and other NZSL users. It is also intended to guide the work of government agencies.

The Ministry is working with the NZSL Board to refresh the previous strategy, which expired in 2023. The refreshed strategy will be launched in late 2025. The Ministry will support the implementation of the strategy, and will continue to support the NZSL Board to provide annual reports to the Minister for Disability Issues.

The Ministry's work on the NZSL Strategy contributes to all of our strategic outcomes: accessibility, education, employment, health, housing and justice.

3

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities response

New Zealand ratified the UNCRPD in 2008 and is committed to periodic reviews. The most recent periodic review was in 2022 and resulted in 63 recommendations (called 'concluding observations').

The Government has agreed to accept 30 recommendations and progress a further 17 through the refresh of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. Responsibility for progressing the recommendations will sit with different agencies across government.

The Ministry coordinates and reports on New Zealand's commitments under the UNCRPD. This contributes to all our strategic outcomes: accessibility, education, employment, health, housing and justice.

4

Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care response

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care was established in 2018 to investigate abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults in the care of the State and faith-based institutions. The final report, *Whanaketia – through pain and trauma, from darkness to light*, was released in July 2024.

The Ministry is working with the Crown Response Office and other agencies to support the Crown response, with a focus on improvements to the care safety system and achieving better safety outcomes for disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori in care settings.

The Ministry's work on the response to the Royal Commission is foundational work that will ultimately contribute to our accessibility, health and justice strategic outcomes.

5

Accessibility Work Programme

The Ministry's Accessibility Work Programme recognises New Zealand's commitment to accessibility under the UNCRPD. The Accessibility Work Programme is a mix of short and longer-term actions that will take opportunities within current regulatory and policy settings to improve accessibility for disabled people – both physical and digital accessibility. This involves identifying good practice, ways to share and scale good practice, and raising awareness to help people and society do the right thing.

In the next 12 to 18 months we will refresh the Accessibility Charter, stabilise the Alternate Formats service, and scope a 'front door' for disability information and advice. We will continue working with the Ministry of Transport on parking permits and parking fines.

Longer term, we will develop a strategic approach to the Accessibility Work Programme, collaborating with other agencies to ensure they build accessibility into their work from the outset.

The Accessibility Work Programme will contribute primarily to the Ministry's accessibility strategic outcome, as well as our other strategic outcomes. It will also contribute to the outcome areas in the New Zealand Disability Strategy: education, employment, health, housing and justice.



6

Creating employment opportunities in the public service

The Ministry is working with the Public Service Commission to help create employment opportunities in the public service for disabled people. This work involves a four-point plan spanning 2024 to 2026 that will:

- create opportunities for employment pathways into the public service
- champion the disability value proposition and showcase the talent of disabled people
- model and promote good practice and celebrate success stories
- influence and build disability inclusion and confidence
- build strong practices around data and evidence to measure the success of public service disability initiatives.

Actions for 2025 include launching guidelines for agencies employing disabled people and launching an internship programme for disabled people.

The Ministry's work to support the creation of employment opportunities in the public service will contribute to our employment strategic outcome.

7

Reshaping our Ministry

Following our establishment as a standalone public service department, we are continuing our Reshaping our Ministry process, so we are well-positioned to deliver on our stewardship role and work programme, as well as contributing to other Government priorities. This involves finalising our organisational structure and our operating model.

Our Reshaping our Ministry process will ensure we have a strong Ministry with the appropriate capability and systems to ensure our success.

Reshaping our Ministry is foundational work that will ultimately contribute to all our strategic outcomes: accessibility, education, employment, health, housing and justice.

The next 12 to 18 months will lay the foundations for the period that follows, with much of our future work programme to be determined by the refreshed New Zealand Disability Strategy and New Zealand Sign Language Strategy, and by the Government response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care. We anticipate that once the foundations for our future work programme are laid, it may require us to update our strategic intentions in about two years' time.

How we work with others

As a system steward, the Ministry works in collaboration with others to drive real and meaningful change. Our valued relationships are at the heart of what we do.

Our three organisational values provide the foundation for the way that we work. We aim to work in ways that are values-based, and this helps to foster trust, capability and confidence.

We value the insights and contributions that our communities bring and recognise the demands on their time in an increasingly complex environment. It is important to provide time and resources for relationships to develop as this sets a strong foundation for building relationships that are meaningful, sustainable and enduring.

Growing community capability and leadership is part of our commitment to reciprocal relationships based on shared success so that disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau can thrive. This includes growing governance capability and supporting disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori into governance roles across the public sector.

Disability groups and communities

The Ministry works with a range of disability groups that are impairment specific, represent different community perspectives including tāngata whaikaha Māori, or that we convene for particular purposes, such as to support Ministry work programmes. These relationships, including with the Disabled People's Organisations Coalition, help meet New Zealand's obligation under the UNCRPD to consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children, through their representative organisations.

In addition, we are exploring innovative ways to gather the views of disabled individuals who may not be engaged with or represented by disability groups.

We invite feedback on our work from disability groups, including through our engagement on major work programmes such as the New Zealand Disability Strategy refresh and the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy refresh. We also support disability groups to engage with other government agencies.

Māori-Crown relationships

The Ministry is committed to ensuring that the values and aspirations of Turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau are reflected in our work, including recognition and respect for cultural identity, knowledge and values, and supporting access to te ao Māori.

As we continue to build our organisational maturity and set the foundations for meaningful relationships to grow, we will identify strategic opportunities to work together with iwi and hapū Māori to address the disparities experienced by Turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau.

Central and local government

The Ministry provides support to, and receives direction from, the Ministerial Disability Leadership Group. The Ministerial Disability Leadership Group is chaired by the Minister for Disability Issues, has a membership of Ministers with key portfolios impacting on disabled people, and provides collective leadership and direction on disability issues across government.

It is our job to influence strategic policy across government by working with other agencies, especially on the Government Targets.

We take opportunities as they arise to work with local government.

Business and industry

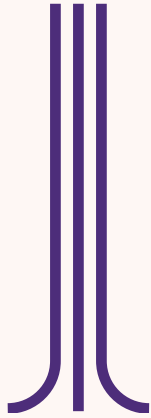
We take opportunities to connect with business and industry to raise the profile of disabled people – as potential employees, employers, entrepreneurs and customers. We encourage businesses and industries to consider accessibility in their physical premises and services, and we boost their good practice and innovation.

The wider community

As a steward for disability issues, part of the Ministry's role is promoting societal change. The responsibility for making sure disabled people thrive in New Zealand belongs to everyone – and with information and support, most people, organisations and businesses want to do the right thing. We provide that information and support, while championing the disability value proposition and showcasing the talent of disabled people. We help build understanding that disability is something that anyone can experience across their life course, and disabled people bring great value to our society, culture and economy.

Our values

We are a Ministry based on three enduring values.



Mana taurite
Equity drives us



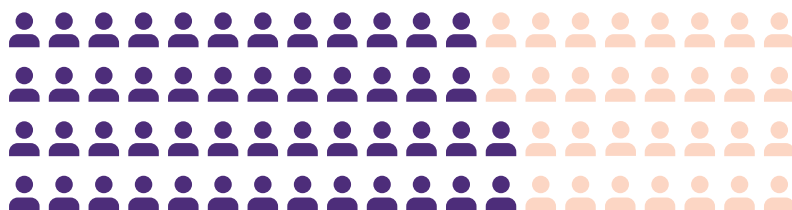
Mana kaha
We strengthen
and support



Mana tūhura
We explore
and learn

Our team

We have approximately 80 fulltime equivalent staff members, and about 62 percent of our staff are disabled.



62%
of our staff
are disabled

We are committed to providing reasonable accommodations. This means creating an environment intended to ensure equality of opportunity by meeting an employee's needs in relation to disability, family commitments, and particular practices of an employee's religious or ethical beliefs.

Te reo Māori, tikanga, whakataukī and karakia are woven into our daily life as a Ministry.

We are arranged into three groups, each led by a Deputy Chief Executive.

Strategy and Enablement

Our Strategy and Enablement Group is responsible for making sure the Ministry has the capability to achieve our purpose, by delivering our corporate functions, delivering the Alternate Formats service, and ensuring probity, risk management and safety.



Deputy Chief Executive
Ginny Baddeley

Policy and Insights

Our Policy and Insights Group leads advice to Ministers, and progresses major work programmes, such as the refresh of the New Zealand Disability Strategy and the Government response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Group focuses on system-level change supported by data and insights.



Deputy Chief Executive
Ben O'Meara

Outreach and Innovation

Our Outreach and Innovation Group delivers accessibility initiatives, invests in community governance capability and leadership, develops trust with our stakeholders, and creates a strong foundation from which we can influence.



Deputy Chief Executive
Rebecca Elvy

Kaihautū – Chief Advisor Māori

Our Chief Executive is also supported by a Kaihautū – Chief Advisor Māori, who sits on the Executive Leadership Team and grows our Ministry capability to maintain effective Māori-Crown relationships and act as an honourable Tiriti partner.



Kaihautū

Ronelle Baker – Ngāti Porou, Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngāi Tāmanuhiri, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāpuhi

As part of our transition to a standalone public service department, we are undergoing a 'Reshaping our Ministry' process to make sure we are well-placed to deliver on the stewardship role Cabinet agreed for us. We are setting in place a new operating model that includes the structure, capabilities, culture and processes that will ensure our success.

Measuring our performance

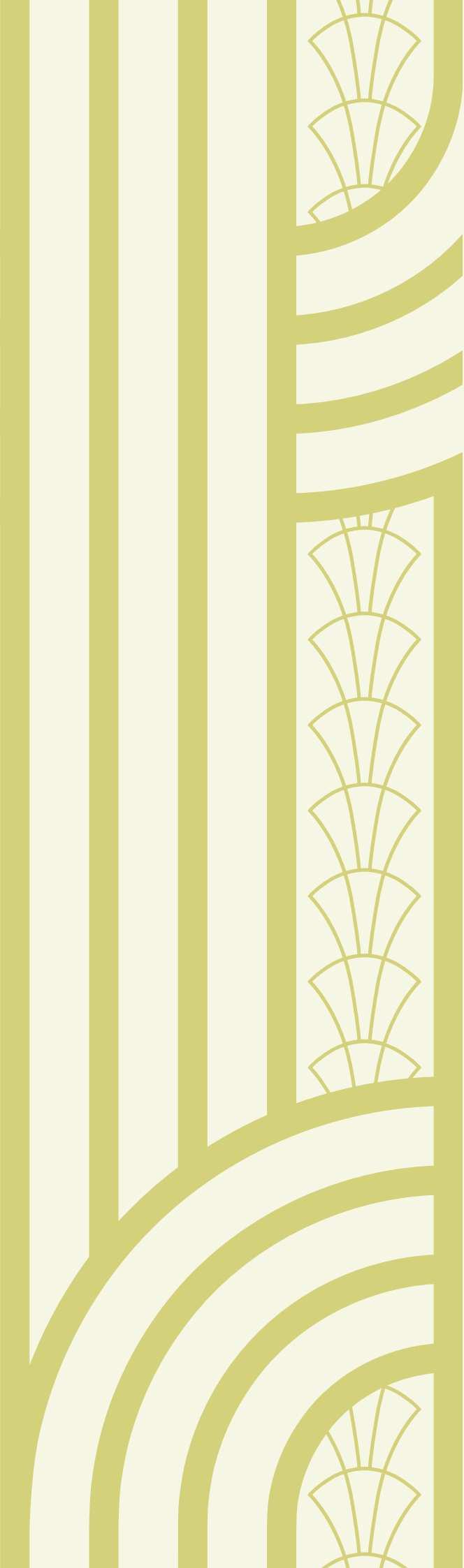
The Ministry uses three broad types of performance measures.

Our **strategic outcome measures** show how disabled people are faring in relation to our strategic outcomes. These measures form part of our system-level monitoring role, including our role reporting annually on the New Zealand Disability Strategy, and will also be made public in our dashboard reporting of the outcome areas of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. They help indicate the effectiveness of cross-government work to improve outcomes for disabled people.

Our **appropriation measures** show how well we have delivered our external commitments and made use of our funding. These measures include the quality of our policy advice and Ministerial satisfaction with our policy advice.

Our **work programme measures** use typical reporting and project approaches to show how we are delivering on our work programme.





**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government