



The draft New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026-2030

Nau mai, haere mai. The Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha is consulting on the draft New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026-2030.

Developed with disabled people and the disability community, this strategy outlines Government commitment and invites all New Zealanders to help make New Zealand accessible and equitable.

We encourage everyone to contribute to building a New Zealand where disabled people thrive.

Vision

This is a statement describing the future that disabled people want to achieve through the strategy.

The proposed vision is:

New Zealand is an accessible and equitable society for disabled people and their whānau – a place where disabled people thrive, lead, and participate in all aspects of life.

Principles

The principles will help make sure the strategy reflects the things that are important to disabled people.

Seven principles are proposed for the strategy.

- **Accessibility –**
Creating environments where everyone benefits, not just disabled people. Inclusive design makes spaces and services work better for all.
- **Choice and control –**
Disabled people are experts in their own lives and deserve the same self-determination as everyone else.
- **Equity, cultural inclusion and intersectionality –**
Disabled individuals have unique identities within diverse whānau, communities, and cultures.
- **Human rights –**
Strategy grounded in key frameworks: UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **Participation and inclusion –**
Disabled people have the right to active membership in communities and cultures across all aspects of life.
- **Respect and dignity –**
Everyone deserves respect. Societal attitudes significantly impact disabled people's lives.
- **The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) –**
Establishes Māori-Crown relationship, recognizing tāngata whaikaha Māori's unique position and ensuring their partnership, participation and protection.



Priority outcome areas and actions

The strategy has 5 priority outcome areas: **education, employment, health, housing, and justice.**

Each area has a goal, a description of what success means, a case for change, and a set of actions to achieve success for disabled people.

You can provide feedback on all priority outcome areas or select those of most interest to you.



Education

The goal for education

Every learner is supported to attend, participate and progress in education. There is a high expectation that all learners – including disabled learners – will achieve their potential in the education setting of their choice.

What success in education means

Educators plan for diverse learners to succeed. The education system has high expectations for all disabled learners, focusing on their strengths and aspirations. Learning support is responsive, timely and effective, easy to navigate, and delivered by a skilled workforce. Early intervention happens at the right time and is effective. Kaupapa Māori education settings have access to the right resources delivered by a capable workforce. Data is gathered to support and understand the progress of learners. Tertiary education providers are supported to implement disability action plans, with progress monitored.

Education actions

There are **nine actions** that are designed to:

- **Advance Budget 25 priorities:** Deliver investments to strengthen and expand learning support.
- **Strengthen the education system:** Improve teacher training and guidance, increase school accountability for disabled learners' progress, ensure kaupapa Māori settings have the resources they need, and improve data on disabled learners.
- **Embed tertiary accountability:** Continue implementing the review process for disability action plans in tertiary education.



Employment

The goal for employment

Disabled people will have meaningful career opportunities, equal to non-disabled people, and be valued the same way. Disability-confident employers will recognise disabled people's talents and will provide accessible and inclusive workplaces throughout the employment lifecycle.

What success in employment means

Disabled people have meaningful career, employment and self-employment opportunities, equal to non-disabled people. They have the right resources and support, and confidence their employer can help them, to thrive at work, whether they are urban or rural, in a workplace or working remotely. Better work outcomes give disabled people more economic security, dignity, self-determination and choice.

Employment actions

There are **seven actions** to support disabled job seekers and employers, that are designed to:

- **Provide clear guidance** for disabled people and employers.
- **Review specialist employment supports** and expand mentorship programmes.
- **Build employer confidence and awareness:** Improve accessibility across the employment lifecycle and run a national campaign on inclusion and the value of disabled employees.



Health

The goal for health

Disabled people will achieve the highest possible standard of health and wellbeing. They will decide what this means for themselves and their whānau.

What success in health means

The health system enhances quality of life for disabled people. Self-determination means disabled people can make informed choices and have their decisions respected. Tāngata whaikaha Māori are understood as part of a collective, and can involve whānau in their health in the ways they want. Accessibility, equity and inclusion are embedded throughout the health system supported by a skilled and responsive health workforce. This includes disabled people at every level. Better data is collected and used for system improvement.

Health actions

There are **five actions** that are designed to:

- **Review health policies and practices:** Make the system fairer and more inclusive, and develop tools that support self-determination and decision-making.
- **Build workforce capability:** Including employ more disabled people in health roles.
- **Improve health system data** by identifying disabled people, and record accessibility needs in the NHI system.



Priority outcome areas and actions



Housing

The goal for housing

Disabled people and their whānau have affordable, healthy, secure and accessible homes that meet their needs.

What success in housing means

Disabled people have a range of suitable housing options in the community, so they can choose where they live. They enjoy secure tenure in housing, can move if they want, and do not experience delays accessing housing when leaving hospital inpatient care. The housing sector meets accessibility needs, and the supply of accessible housing meets demand, with monitoring in place. Urban design and planning create accessible neighbourhoods. Suitable housing improves disabled people's outcomes and protects against harm, neglect, violence and abuse.

Housing actions

There are **six actions** that are designed to:

- **Define accessible homes:** Create voluntary guidelines to support this.
- **Improve housing data:** Match disabled people with accessible social housing and understand regional demand for new accessible builds.
- **Increase accessibility:** Remove barriers to accessible builds in the private market and review the housing modifications system.



Justice

The goal for justice

Disabled people's human rights and freedoms will be protected, and their disability rights will be realised. Disabled people will be treated fairly and equitably by the justice system. Justice system policies and practices will embed accessibility, inclusion and lived experience.

What success in justice means

Disabled children, young people and adults in care are safeguarded from abuse, neglect and violence. Disabled children and young people are supported to avoid the care and protection or youth justice systems. Disabled people who interact with the youth justice or criminal justice systems have their rights and accessibility needs considered and get support to transition out. Those charged with an offence but unable to stand trial are treated consistently with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act. Justice sector workforces have the skills to uphold disabled people's rights. Disabled parents in Family Court will have equitable access to family justice services.

Justice actions

There are **six actions** that are designed to:

- **Create a safeguarding framework:** For prisons, youth justice residences, and disability support facilities, improve data on disabled people's experience of crime, and review CPMIP and its interactions with IDCCR and MHCAT.
- **Invest early:** Keep disabled young people out of youth justice, review protections in family law, strengthen family violence prevention, and build disability competence in the justice workforce.

How we will measure progress

The Ministry will measure progress against the strategy to help inform an annual progress report to Parliament.

We will:

- ask government agencies to report back on the progress of actions they are responsible for
- use system level indicators to show whether the strategy is improving medium to long term outcomes for disabled people
- use indicators for each of the strategy's priority outcome areas, to be published in an interactive dashboard alongside more detailed supporting measures.

Give feedback by joining a hui, or fill in the form online.

Find a hui to join here



Give online feedback here



whaikaha.govt.nz/disability-strategy
19 Aug – 28 Sept

 **Whaikaha**
Ministry of Disabled People



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