

A Whaikaha–Ministry of Disabled People logo with purple lettering. On the left is a QR code and underneath the words "scan for the NZSL name"



## **New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026-2030**

**Summary of work to action the justice priority area**

## Introduction

The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026-2030 (the strategy) has 34 actions across five priority areas of education, employment, health, housing and justice. During 2026:

- 13 actions will be delivered or started
- 6 actions will be developed
- 12 actions will be scoped (planned).

This document is a 'change story' to explain:

- the goal for the priority area and the supporting actions
- when the actions will be done and by which government agencies
- the order for actions and the links between the actions
- the risks and challenges to doing the actions.

A change story for each priority area is on the Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People website.

Education: <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/our-work/new-zealand-disability-strategy-2026-2030/delivering-the-actions#scroll-to-1>

Short url: <https://shorturl.at/wKTW5>

Employment: <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/our-work/new-zealand-disability-strategy-2026-2030/delivering-the-actions#scroll-to-2>

Short url: <https://shorturl.at/FJghF>

Health: <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/our-work/new-zealand-disability-strategy-2026-2030/delivering-the-actions#scroll-to-3>

Short url: <https://shorturl.at/8YIE6>

Housing: <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/our-work/new-zealand-disability-strategy-2026-2030/delivering-the-actions#scroll-to-4>

Short url: <https://shorturl.at/fijjr>

## **Justice change story**

In the justice priority area, there is a goal and 7 supporting actions. In 2026, 1 action will be developed and 5 will be scoped. One action will be scoped in 2027.

Several agencies will be working together on the justice actions, including the Ministry of Justice, the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention, the Department of Corrections, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha, Oranga Tamariki, New Zealand Police, and other agencies as necessary.

### **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 and will be supported to meaningfully participate. Justice system policies and practices will embed accessibility, inclusion and lived experience.

### **Actions for justice**

To make progress towards the strategy's goal for justice, Government will do the following.

1. Implement a safeguarding framework for disabled people in long-term detention settings (such as prisons and youth justice residences) and Disability Support Services funded residential facilities. The framework will include preventing, reporting, responding, and safely removing disabled people from abusive situations.

2. Carry out a cross-agency project to fix gaps in information about disabled people's experiences of crime. This will include disabled people in residential and secure facilities, and issues like cyberbullying.
3. Develop a social investment plan for early intervention and support, to reduce disabled children and young people entering the youth justice system.
4. The Law Commission has been asked to review the Criminal Procedure (Mentally Impaired Persons) Act 2003 (CPMIP).

This review is expected to look at the interface of the CPMIP with other relevant legislation, such as the Intellectual Disability (Compulsory Care and Rehabilitation) Act 2003 and Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992.

5. Review, as work programmes allow, protections for disabled people in family law, including adoption, guardianship and personal property rights. Reviews will consider where stronger provisions or support are needed, supported decision-making, and using plain language in key justice sector legislation and processes.

Reviewing human rights legislation, including whether additional protections against discrimination are needed, should also be considered as work programmes allow.

6. Weave understanding from safeguarding approaches for disabled people into the multi-agency responses to family violence. This includes training

the workforce to make sure disabled people experiencing violence and abuse receive a safe, coordinated response centred on their needs.

7. Create a plan to train the justice sector workforce so it is more disability competent, including Deaf cultural competence and using mana and trauma informed practices. This plan will increase disabled people in the workforce and consider mandatory professional standards.

### **When and how the justice actions are being carried out**

Work is in early scoping stages and agency leads for several actions need to be confirmed.

For **action 1**, **action 3** and **action 7**, agencies will do stock-takes of existing or planned initiatives. This will make clear:

- what work is being done
- what needs to be prioritised
- where there are gaps.

For **action 2**, Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ) has started work on part of Census 2030 that will be relevant. Detailed planning for action 2 is expected to begin in 2027, when the scope of the Stats NZ work is clearer.

None of the actions are strictly dependent on one another, but many are linked. Action 1 is closely linked with:

- action 7 which is needed to identify harm and to meet safeguarding obligations
- action 2 which provides the data needed to understand harm and monitor improvements.

Action 3 is linked to actions 6 and 7 to provide protection and timely support for disabled young people and their whānau. Scoping for actions 1, 2 and 3 will set the direction for the next phases and support coordinated delivery.

Work on **Action 5**, led by the Ministry of Justice, is progressing in parts. The Law Commission has released its final report on adult decision-making capacity law. This will affect the personal property rights and supported decision-making parts of the action. The other parts relating to adoption, guardianship, plain language improvements, and any possible human rights law changes, will happen as agency work programmes allow.

**Action 6** is being led by the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence Prevention, which will create a project initiation brief to confirm roles and responsibilities.

Actions 1, 5, 6, and 7 are linked with wider cross-government work arising from:

- the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care
- the Dame Karen Poutasi Review, which was an independent review of the children's system response to abuse.
- the implementation of Te Aorerekura, which is the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence.

Drawing on the work started in these programmes will keep progress on these actions aligned, remove duplication, and deliver services that work together in a coherent way.

## **Risks and challenges for the justice section**

Many of the actions have a confirmed key agency lead, including actions 2, 4, 5 and 6. However, other actions needing cross-agency collaboration do not yet have confirmed leads. Whaikaha is supporting these actions by undertaking the initial scoping and stock-takes. This early work may create timing pressures, as Whaikaha will need to balance this work alongside other work. It may also affect other agencies' ability to deliver within existing resources and increase risks if government priorities change.

How quickly Actions 4 and 5 can be completed depends on other government legislative priorities and on the Law Commission's work programme. Because of this, the timing for these actions is uncertain.