

Draft Disability Strategy Survey

Submission to the Office of Disability Issues

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Contact

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About the New Zealand Nurses Organisation

NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand. NZNO represents over 47,000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on professional and employment related matters. NZNO is affiliated to the International Council of Nurses and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

NZNO promotes and advocates for professional excellence in nursing by providing leadership, research and education to inspire and progress the profession of nursing. NZNO represents members on employment and industrial matters and negotiates collective employment agreements.

NZNO embraces te Tiriti o Waitangi and contributes to the improvement of the health status and outcomes of all peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand through influencing health, employment and social policy development enabling quality nursing care provision. NZNO's vision is *Freed to care, Proud to nurse.*

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Draft Disability Survey. NZNO has consulted its members and staff in the preparation of this submission.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. *Overall, what we think of the draft strategy? Are there any overall changes or improvements you would like to be made? Is there anything missing?*

Although this is more like a high level document outlining outcomes for people with disabilities than a strategy as such at this stage, we believe it does set relevant high level goals for people with disabilities to enable them to reach their full potential. We suggest that it is important that the Strategy is aligned with both national and international strategies and goals for people with disabilities. For example, the strategy should recognize the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that specifically relate to people with disabilities:

- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The importance of the United National Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities should also be recognized as the overarching human rights document for disabled people. It reaffirms that all people with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. *Our vision – where to from here*

The NZNO supports the vision but believes it may be more appropriate to use the phrase 'optimizing potential' as well as, or instead of, an emphasis on achieving outcomes as more appropriate for people with disabilities. The NZNO is pleased to see te Tiriti o Waitangi up front in the document. We agree with the principles but believe there should be more emphasis on equality and the removal of structural barriers. Structural factors such as discrimination contribute to risk for people with disabilities. A rights- based approach requires us to examine the multiple ways in which inequality and discrimination characterize the lives of people with disabilities and to formulate a response based on a human rights framework. See Human Rights Commission document *A Fair Goal for All, Addressing Structural Discrimination in Public Services*.

We acknowledge that Māori have an equal right to the highest standards of health, and the State is responsible for ensuring this is achieved under article 24.2 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples . We also acknowledge the rights under te Tiriti o Waitangi of Māori to good health that encompass wellness in its fullest sense and including the physical, spiritual and cultural wellbeing of Māori as individuals and collectively .

3. *What's important to us*

Investing long term could also focus on prevention. For example, the prevention of neural tube defects (NTDs) through the supplementation of flour. By focusing on preventing illness and by making it easier to choose healthy options (like eating healthy food, not drinking alcohol or only drinking at low-risk levels, and undertaking regular physical activity), we can help people to avoid developing long-term health conditions or slow the development of those conditions. Most importantly, we can do this by providing universal health services and public health initiatives that cover

the whole population, and having services in place to intervene early, help people to return to good health and remain independent. As part of this, we need tailored approaches for some individuals and population groups, to help them access the same level of service and enjoy the same outcomes as others.

NZNO supports a twin-track approach and universal design. We believe it is important to ensure consistent management processes and quality assurance for universal services and supports across all sectors. Disability services and supports should spring from the same starting point—a universal right to access them. They can then be tailored within any setting - education, employment, health and justice etc. Any strategy should be evidence informed with NZ specific research and we trust actions will support this.

4. Outcome 1: Education

NZNO would like to see recognition that health assessment and support is built into education outcomes. To ensure people with disability have the fullest participation possible, education services need to be linked with health and social services.

5. Outcome 2: Employment

The best employment outcomes require specific programs to change people's attitudes and to open opportunities for people with disabilities. To do that, employers need to be educated and supported to enable them to be open to and confident in employing people with disabilities. Government support for employment schemes – providing funding for access support staff or physical modifications to workplaces could help overcome initial barriers for employers. Additionally, ensure continuity of financial support for disabled people leaving the benefits system in case work options do not work out.

6. Outcome 3: Health and Wellbeing

Cultural competency is part of the scope of all practice of all regulated health professionals and should be a requirement for anyone working with people with a disability. NZNO also maintains that a culturally competent workforce starts with proportionate representation. The NZNO is confident that regulated health professionals have robust provisions to ensure a consistent scope of practice for nurses. The NZ Nurses Code of Conduct (2012) outlines that culture includes, but is not restricted to, age or generation; gender; sexual orientation; occupation and socioeconomic status; ethnic origin or migrant experience; religious or spiritual belief; and disability. Unsafe cultural practice comprises any action which diminishes, demeans or disempowers the cultural identity and wellbeing of an individual.

7. *Outcome 4: Justice*

Mental health, dental health and some other clinical conditions can be overlooked among people with disabilities and this needs appropriate clinical oversight. The Equally Well Position statement acknowledges the link between mental illness and poor physical outcomes and aims to draw on expertise and knowledge across the health and related sectors to translate the available evidence into action.

8. *Outcome 5: Accessibility*

NZNO believes guidelines for ensuring an accessible built environment should be mandatory, for example within local councils. Health impact assessments should be undertaken to ensure the built environment is accessible for people with all disabilities.

9. *Outcome 6: Attitudes*

NZNO agrees with this section but it would be useful to provide more concrete examples of how people with disabilities would like attitudes to be expressed and changed.

10. *Outcome 7: Choice and Control*

NZNO particularly supports the need to support people with disabilities with information and explanations about their options, and changes to existing systems. Decision making is only as good as the information that you have.

11. *Outcome 8: Leadership*

This section is in line with the notion of 'Nothing about us - without us', the idea that no policy should be decided by any representative without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy. It is crucial to promote leadership among disabled people and their wider networks so they can influence the development of policies, services planning and delivery, and other decision-making processes.

12. *Making it work – a plan for action*

2018 consultation is a long way away – is there any need to wait? We strongly support public consultation and hope robust guidelines are used, including ensuring wide engagement and sufficient time for feedback. The new outcomes framework is aspirational and can only be realized with appropriate action and specific commitment to

funding. A really critical step would be to include planning for a sustainable, quality workforce.

CONCLUSION

13. NZNO represent nurses and support workers and are well placed to be able to give advice and offer information. We would be very happy to work with you on this.

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