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Consultation begins today - here's some prompts on what to say

[Awhi Ngā Mātua](#)

Feb 10



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Kia ora community,

We are calling on the community and its allies and friends to please attend a consultation session or fill out the community consultation survey for disability support services.

Starting **TODAY 10 February**, Disability Support Services opened [the community consultation](#).

They want your feedback on assessments and funding options for equipment and services. We know you've already done this. We know it's frustrating. But it's crucial to do it again.

Specifically, this round of consultation asks what potential changes to assessment tools and processes and flexible funding options you would like to see.

There are [several ways you can participate](#) including:

- attend [an in person workshop](#)
- attend an [online briefing workshop](#)
- [make a submission](#) – either in writing or by video
- [complete a short survey](#)

We know you are tired. We know you feel let down. We know you've already given feedback. But we have to give our feedback again. **It's crucial.**

We are in crisis right now as a community - if you have any energy, speak up for those who don't. If you don't have the energy, ask your family or loved ones to provide feedback for you.

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Help - I don't know what to say!

The most important thing you can share is your story. We encourage you to share what your life has been like since the 18 March changes and since the ongoing cuts to community support services.

Lost a carer? Lost funding for Riding for the Disabled? Lost the ability to claim something that previously helped you have respite or helped your child? [Share this with Disability Support Services.](#)

Most people in our community are now facing costs they didn't have before the cuts and restrictions to flexibility. This government campaigned on cost-of-living issues and they continue to claim they're reducing costs for people. We know costs are increasing for disabled people and their carers, so please share how you've been impacted.

Talk about the impact of these changes to your child and your family. Talk about how it has made you feel about your future, and what tangible changes it has made to your present.

Download the submission forms:

- [Submission form \(DOCX 357 KB\)](#)
- [Submission form \(PDF 97 KB\)](#)

After completing the submission form and email it to: DSS_submissions@msd.govt.nz.

You can also send an audio or video submission to: NZSL_submissions@msd.govt.nz

If you find the idea of submission prompts too overwhelming - just email them at: DSS_submissions@msd.govt.nz

If you need prompts ahead of the community consultations consider the following:

Since the restrictions to funding support and changes to the way disability support is delivered, we have struggled in the following ways:

-
-
-

We have incurred the following costs due to the cuts:

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-
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What should we ask for?

Here's some guidance on what you might like to demand:

I am calling on the taskforce to recognise the impact these changes and cuts have had to the disabled community.

I am asking that flexibility for funding spend must be returned to what it was before 18 March. The removal of flexibility is an attack on the dignity of families who know what their tamariki need to thrive.

Carer support is meant to support carers and parents - this Government must recognise and value carers and apologise and build trust with the community.

The government needs to budget better for the increasing need in the disability community. If the government cannot balance their budget then they need to be transparent about this rather blaming disabled people and families)

Tamariki with low to moderate needs still need funding. Providing funding now to tamariki with lower support needs is a form of early intervention and prevention that often reduces the severity of need later.

Many disabled, medically fragile, and neurodivergent tamariki are not in mainstream schooling, refusing requests for funding allocations and supports during school hours is not fit for purpose for most of these tamariki. Return flexibility for funding to pre-18 March levels.

Disability Support Services policies need to match and enact Enabling Good Lives principles.

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If you're wondering what specifically you will be asked in the survey or consultation - this is what they're consulting on:

Assessment tools and processes

The consultation includes a series of questions about:

- making sure there is a consistent approach to needs assessment
- improving how the assessment tool reflects the diversity of disability
- assessing the needs of family/whānau and carers
- making sure the services and support a person receives continues to meet their needs
- helping people access support that isn't available through DSS.

It basically asks - How can Disability Support Services make their assessment and allocation processes clearer?

- [Fact sheet - Assessments and allocation \(DOCX 506 KB\)](#)
- [Fact sheet - Assessments and allocation \(PDF 305 KB\)](#)

Flexible Funding

The consultation will include options for changing how flexible funding can be used:

Option 1: link flexible funding to the person's plan, with oversight of how it is used.

Option 2: adjust current lists of what can and cannot be funded using flexible funding.

- Disability Services [Fact sheet: accessing and using flexible funding \(PDF 308 KB\)](#)
 - Disability Services [Fact sheet: accessing and using flexible funding \(DOCX 501 KB\)](#)
-

I'm not a parent or career of a disabled child - what can I do?

You can talk to the people in your life who love and care for disabled tamariki and help them to advocate for their families. You can share what you've seen in their life (with consent). How has their life changed since 18 March?

What has been happening for their child? Has the child's parent been able to have any respite? What impact has that had on them? How are they doing emotionally?

How is their child coping? What resources and services have they lost?

You can also offer to watch their child while [they attend a public consultation](#). Each event is 2.5 hours long - children will need to be cared for while these are held. Many parents no longer have carers to attend these.

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Please share this post far and wide. Cut and paste it and put it on social media. Share it with everyone you know. We really need to make the most of this small consultation opportunity as it may be the only one our community gets.

Arohanui, The Awhi team.

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