

Pathways to Inclusion

Ngā ara whakauru ki te iwi whānui

Improving Vocational Services for People with Disabilities



Associate Minister
of Social Services and
Employment

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minister's foreword

Tēnā koutou katoa.

Tēnā koutou ngā tāngata hauā me ō koutou whānau, hoa, hāpori hoki, tae atu ki te hunga e tautoko ana i te whakakōtahi i a ngāi tātau.

Greetings to all people with disabilities, their families/whānau, friends and communities, and all those who support a fully-inclusive society.

In April 2001, the Labour/Alliance Government launched the New Zealand Disability Strategy. The strategy's vision is for a society that values the lives of people with disabilities and enhances their full participation in society.

Pathways to Inclusion is an important step towards realising that vision. It signals a new direction for vocational services, aimed at achieving greater participation of people with disabilities in employment and in our communities.

During our review of vocational services, people with disabilities told us they want to determine their own futures and be treated as valued members of society. They want services that help them to find work, are tailored to their individual needs, and are delivered by trained, professional staff.

Service providers told us they need a clear policy direction, and greater financial security and support.

Pathways to Inclusion responds positively to both those calls.

We will do everything we can to make sure people with disabilities have the opportunity to gain real skills and real jobs, with the same rights and conditions as other workers.

Our decision to repeal the Disabled Persons Employment Promotion Act 1960 (DPEP Act) is part of this commitment. The DPEP Act treats people with disabilities unfairly by giving sheltered workshops a blanket exemption from minimum wage and holidays legislation.

When the Act is repealed, people with disabilities in an employment relationship will have the same rights and entitlements as everyone else. This is a significant and long-awaited change, which recognises the human rights of people with disabilities, and the Government's commitment to create a fully-inclusive society.

The primary focus of *Pathways to Inclusion* will be on providing genuine employment opportunities for people with disabilities. However, full-time paid work is not practical or desirable for everybody. For this reason, we are also committed to improving the quality of vocational services that help people participate in their communities in other ways.

Change to the new environment will be phased in over five years. During that time providers will be supported to develop new employment relationships and community participation programmes. In this way, we will ensure that there is minimum disruption to the sector and that people with disabilities continue to have access to vocational services and opportunities.

Pathways to Inclusion gives the Government a new foundation on which to build vocational services. I would like to thank all those who have been involved in this review. Your contributions have helped forge a new direction that truly reflects the rights and needs of the people at the centre of all our services.

However, our efforts will only succeed if there is a mindshift at all levels - among communities, employers, service providers, families/whānau and people with disabilities themselves.

The challenge for us all is to stop judging people by what they can't do, and start valuing what they can do.

It is a very exciting time for people with disabilities and those who support them. The most important thing is that we keep talking, keep sharing our ideas and expertise so that we can work together through this period of change. ■

Together, we can make a world of difference.



Hon Ruth Dyson
Minister of Disability Issues
Associate Minister of Social Services and Employment



Executive Summary

Pathways to Inclusion sets out the Labour/Alliance Government's new direction for vocational services for people with disabilities.

The Government has agreed that the aims of vocational services are:

- to increase the participation of people with disabilities in employment, and
- to increase the participation of people with disabilities in communities.

This new direction is the result of a review of vocational services funded by the Department of Work and Income (DWI). The review has also considered a range of vocational services funded through other agencies.

Services that do not have employment or community participation aims, but focus on providing services such as respite care and day care, are not included in the new direction. Boundary issues between different government agencies (such as DWI, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and any other relevant agency), and how to manage these issues, are part of a stream of further work arising out of the review.

The Government will repeal the Disabled Persons Employment Promotion (DPEP) Act 1960, the legislation that provides for minimum wage and holidays exemption for sheltered employment workplaces. This decision is in line with the aim of increasing the participation of people with disabilities in employment as promoted in the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

The changes outlined in this document will be implemented over a five-year period. This transition will give providers time to adjust to the new direction, and ensure that people currently in sheltered employment will continue to have access to the services they need. ■

Introduction



The Government is committed to addressing the challenges facing the vocational services sector.

The vision of the New Zealand Disability Strategy is that people with disabilities live in a society that values them highly and encourages their full participation.

Objective 4 of the strategy seeks to:

“provide opportunities in employment and economic development for disabled people” and “enable disabled people to work in the open labour market (in accordance with human rights principles) and maintain an adequate income.”

In vocational services, this means doing all we can to make sure people with disabilities gain real skills and real jobs, and play an active part in the workforce and their community. Providing people with a range of opportunities for employment, with the same rights and conditions as other workers, is a key step towards inclusion.

At the moment less than half the providers of vocational services offer services that aim to achieve paid employment. For many people employment is a goal to be pursued, no matter how great the barriers.

The ability to participate in the community is also critically important for a sense of inclusion. While for some people this is achieved through work, for others it is through community-based activities, education and training. ■

Vocational Services Review

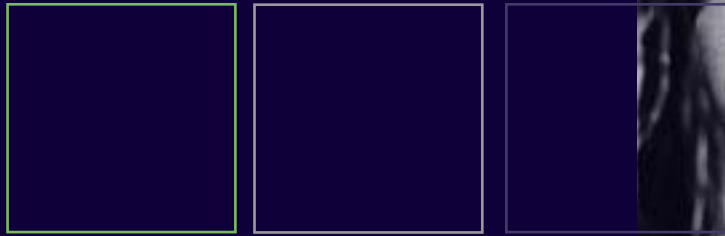
In May 2000, the Government began a formal review of vocational services for people with disabilities funded by DWI. Despite more than a decade of consultation and reviews, the vocational services sector continued to lack direction, overall objectives and clear priorities. There was also confusion about the Government's role and responsibilities in the sector.

Vocational services in this review include services that focus on both employment, training and community participation. These are sometimes known as day services, day activities, supported employment, vocational training, sheltered work, placement into training or work and post-placement support.

These services, now funded by DWI, have generally grown out of community initiatives and have had a range of objectives. This ad hoc development has resulted in the absence of government policy for vocational services, confusion about what government funding is trying to achieve, lack of clarity about the boundaries between services funded by different government agencies, and inconsistent and unequal provision of services.

The review looked at:

- the range and type of vocational services that should be available
- what needs these services were aiming to meet
- the objectives that such services should be trying to achieve and how these can be measured
- the funding responsibility of the Government and others such as



the community, individuals with disabilities and family/whānau/ support people

- the amount of funding required to meet the responsibilities of the Government
- the management of inter-agency boundary and transition issues
- how the distinctive needs of Māori and Pacific people with disabilities should be addressed.

A comprehensive stocktake of vocational services was initially undertaken to see what services were available, to whom, and where the gaps were.

An advisory group of 13 people from the vocational services sector, including people with disabilities, was set up to help guide the work of officials.

Consultation was undertaken, using a submission process, to seek the views of people with disabilities, their families/whānau, caregivers, disability organisations, service providers, and other interested groups and individuals. Relevant material from submissions on the New Zealand Disability Strategy was also considered.

Six key points emerged from the consultation:

1. People with disabilities want to determine their own futures and be treated as valued members of society through removal of barriers to participation in the community and the workforce.
2. People with disabilities want greater access to genuine employment assistance, regardless of the level of support they would require, or the number of hours they could work.

3. People with disabilities need access to quality resources and services (including improved monitoring and accountability mechanisms) provided by trained, professional staff.

4. People with disabilities need services that are tailored to their individual and community needs, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

5. People with disabilities need more realistic levels of assistance and financial security to achieve their personal goals.

6. Providers of employment and community participation services need greater financial security and support to build the capacity of the sector. The annual funding cycle is one area that creates financial insecurity. Lack of training and career structures for people working in the sector is also a concern.

The review concluded that the Government's role in vocational services should be to:

- enhance employment outcomes for people with disabilities
- provide quality employment assistance to as many people as possible
- maintain funding contribution to services that promote community participation
- ensure equitable and transparent funding arrangements
- ensure there are services that meet the needs of all groups of people with disabilities, including people with significant support needs
- improve the capacity of the sector to provide services and improve service quality
- ensure commitments are achievable within budgeted baselines and available funding
- ensure that change will be gradual, with minimum disruption to the sector. ■

Government's Strategy for Vocational Services



OBJECTIVES

As a result of this review, the Government has decided that the objectives of vocational services funded through DWI are:

- 1. to increase the participation of people with disabilities in employment**
- 2. to increase the participation of people with disabilities in their communities.**

The Government has also decided that:

- Services which are primarily focused on outcomes such as respite, personal care, therapy, rehabilitation as a result of treatment, recreation and leisure, should not be funded by DWI through its vocational services allocation. The management of these services will be considered in a report back to Government by the end of October 2001.
- The Disabled Persons Employment Promotions Act 1960, which exempts employers of people with disabilities in sheltered workplaces from minimum wage and holidays legislation, will be repealed. This repeal will be effective in 2002, but existing providers of sheltered employment will be allowed up to five years to work through the changes.
- The Disabled Persons Community Welfare Act (Part III) 1975, which provides for the funding of vocational services, should be reviewed to ensure that it is aligned with the intentions of the new direction for employment and community participation services.

ACTIONS

The Government will implement seven specific strategies to achieve the objectives of vocational services.

1. Increase the focus on employment

- Encourage providers to have a greater focus on paid work.
- Progressively move funding to services that focus on employment-related outcomes.
- Ensure services provide the foundation skills that are vital for people to participate in their communities and in employment and training.
- Provide better on-job support for people with disabilities who enter the workforce.

2. Encourage and enhance community participation

- Recognise that people need different pathways, and sometimes a mix of pathways, to achieve inclusion in their communities.
- Provide practical options to removing barriers to participation in society and improve access to community services and facilities.
- Continue to partially fund community participation services.
- Improve the quality of services.

3. Ensure services are responsive to the needs of all groups of people with disabilities

- Plan for and fund services responsive to the needs of all groups,



including people with significant disability, school leavers with high and complex support needs, Māori, Pacific groups, people who experience mental illness, people who live in rural or isolated areas, and women.

4. Clarify who is eligible for DWI-funded vocational services

- Continue the 16-65 age eligibility criteria.
- Work with other agencies to ensure smooth transitions from school to work, and from work to retirement or other options.
- Continue to support people older than 65 who are employed, for as long as they need support to stay in paid work.

5. Build sector capacity and service quality

- Explore funding options for services that support people in paid work.
- Adjust the overall funding level in the sector over time so that the quality of services improves.
- Widen the role of DWI to enable it to support the sector to improve workforce development, undertake research and evaluation, provide quality assurance, and address recruitment/retention problems.

6. Improve access for jobseekers with disabilities to DWI's mainstream employment-related services

- Clarify boundaries between DWI's specialist employment/community participation services and its mainstream work-related services, and strengthen the provision of mainstream work-related services to jobseekers with disabilities.

7. Change legislation

- Repeal the Disabled Persons Employment Promotion Act 1960.
- Review the Disabled Persons Community Welfare Act (Part III) 1975, the enabling legislation for vocational services.

TIMEFRAME

These changes will take place over a five-year timeframe, so that legislative changes can be made and DWI can work actively with providers, people with disabilities and their communities, to implement change. Gradual implementation will help ensure minimum disruption to the sector and to the people who use services. ■



Conclusion

The Government has listened to the concerns of people with disabilities who are looking for work and/or other ways of participating in their communities, and to those providing services.

Our intention is to build the capacity of the sector in a planned, coherent way to ensure more effective delivery of services.

The measures outlined in this document will be progressively implemented over the next five years as resources allow. New funding (\$3.98 million) was allocated in the recent Budget (May 2001) to help build the capacity of the sector.

People with disabilities have the same right to participate in their communities as other citizens, particularly through employment opportunities. There will be no compromise on this fundamental principle. ■

KEY FACTS

- The Department of Work and Income currently has contracts with about 180 service providers.
- DWI annual budget for vocational services – approximately \$60 million.
- In most cases DWI provides partial funding contributions, which providers supplement from other funding sources.
- Some providers, such as Workbridge and IHC are national organisations; most are local, community-based providers.
- The number of people accessing vocational services through DWI funding is approximately 22,000.
- At present only a minority of services are focused on paid employment outcomes. For many years the range of services currently funded have been known as:
 - Day activities
 - Vocational training
 - Sheltered work
 - Supported employment
 - Open employment placement
 - Job support
 - Self-employment support
 - Training support
- Funding for identified school leavers with very high support needs.

