



# Disability Issues Policy

National believes New Zealand should be a place where people with disabilities have equal opportunities to pursue their goals and aspirations. We believe everyone with a disability should have greater choice and control over their lives.

The current disability system is large and complex. Too many New Zealanders are falling through the cracks and finding it difficult to access the support they need. National is committed to improving disability support and ensuring Government services are more responsive for those with disabilities.

## National will:

- Be ambitious for people with disabilities by taking action to support more people with disabilities to move into work.
- Ensure people and their families sit at the heart of disability policy, and work with them to ensure their disabled whanau receive support that suits their needs and circumstances.
- Grow the Enabling Good Lives model to provide people with disabilities with greater choice and control over the supports they receive and the lives they lead.

## National's record of delivery

National launched the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016–2026 to improve the lives of the 24 per cent New Zealanders with physical, mental, sensory, and learning disabilities.

National is committed to implementing this strategy and making New Zealand a place where people with disabilities have equal opportunities to achieve their goals and aspirations.

National partnered with the disability sector to create the Enabling Good Lives programme. This aims to provide people with greater choice and control over the supports they receive and the lives they lead. We are proud

of this work and our efforts to put people with disabilities at the heart of the services available to them.

## Our commitments

### First 1,000 Days

Our first 1,000 days policy will improve the lives of those with disabilities and their parents. For some children, a more intensive assessment is required before a disability can be diagnosed. This is particularly true where the impairment is intellectual or behavioural. Diagnosis of a disability is an important first step to ensure children with disabilities can access the support they need. Enhanced screening will ensure thorough assessment of whether a child has a disability and for support services to be provided where impairments

or disabilities are identified. National will also provide additional funding for all parents to spend on services they feel will best meet their needs during the first 1,000 days of their child's life. While all parents will receive an allocation of \$3,000, children identified as higher risk or as having additional needs will be allocated up to \$6,000. This will be of considerable benefit for those diagnosed with a disability at a young age.

## National will:

- Provide enhanced screening for children in their first 1,000 days which includes a pre- birth GP focused on preventative measures, a post-birth GP visit and an accelerated before school check for all children at age three.
- Allocate \$3,000 to parents for each child to be spent on support services during the first 1,000 days of that child's life. Extra funding will be allocated to children who are identified as being at risk or as having additional needs.



## School Years

National recognises that children with disabilities may face extra challenges at school. Additional support might be required to assist them as their participation in certain aspects of school and classroom life. As part of National's social investment approach, we will deliver more support at school for those who face additional learning, behavioural and physical needs.

### National will:

- Establish a \$160 million per year fund to support children with additional learning, behavioural and physical needs – allocated based on school roll and need – so school communities can invest in the initiatives they believe are appropriate for their students.
- Invest \$150 million over four years to fund an additional six million hours of teacher aide support in classrooms, equivalent to around 1500 new teacher aides (at 25 hours per week), or an average of 600 hours per school each year.

## Enabling Good Lives

In Government we partnered with the disability sector to create the Enabling Good Lives programme. This provides people with greater choice and control over the supports they receive. Enabling Good Lives has a focus on making people aware of assistance available early in their lives, and takes a proactive approach to providing wrap around support instead of being an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. We are proud of this work because it puts people with disabilities at the heart of the services that affect them.

### National will:

- Build on the reach of the Enabling Good Lives model to provide greater choice for New Zealanders with disabilities to use the supports that suit their individual needs.
- Ensure those who live in small towns and rural areas with high needs are able to access to support services.

## The New Zealand Disability Strategy

National launched the 2016–2026 New Zealand Disability Strategy to improve the lives of New Zealanders with physical, mental, sensory, and learning disabilities. We view this strategy as part of our wider social investment approach. This means investing in programs and initiatives that improve long term outcomes for New Zealanders.

### National will:

- Implement the New Zealand Disability strategy 2016–2026.
- Ensure the strategy is fit for purpose particularly given the challenges COVID-19 poses to those with disabilities. We will keep the voices of those with lived experiences of disability at the heart of this process.

## Employment and Careers

National recognises that challenges exist for those with disabilities to employment. We are committed to increasing job opportunities and breaking down the barriers to employment for those who are able to work. During these difficult economic times, it is important that those with disabilities are supported in their employment and career ambitions.

### National will:

- Support NGOs and organisations working with people with disabilities into vocational training and employment.
- Continue to support a nationwide business and disability network to help New Zealand organisations become more accessible and inclusive toward people with disabilities
- Provide support during the transition from education to employment, by ensuring young people with disabilities are connected with employment services
- Continue work on the Disability Employment Action Plan to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are at the forefront of employers' minds.



## Accessibility

While New Zealand has made progress to being a more accessible place for those with disabilities, much more work needs to occur to overcome challenges those with disabilities face. All our support services can take steps to make life easier for those with disabilities. We also recognise the support Government provides is disparate and can be difficult to navigate. Whether it be in Education, Health or Housing, National will work towards

breaking down the barriers that exist so those with disabilities have equal opportunities.

### National will:

- Provide families with greater tools to care for family members with disabilities and help combat isolation and improve quality of life.
- Improve access to Government services and work with the private sector to encourage greater access and inclusivity.
- Continue to support the introduction of accessibility legislation through Parliament with our ongoing commitment to the cross-party group, Parliamentary Champions of Accessibility Legislation
- Ensure that disabled people understand what support they are entitled to from across government departments and can access support through a new online portal.

## Costings

All fiscal costs, including the new funding streams in the first 1,000 days and Education, are included in National's fiscal plan signed off by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research Inc.