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ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Ara Poutama Aotearoa Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 Summary

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Aotearoa Department of Corrections.

Ara Poutama Aotearoa Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 Summary

Message from the Deputy Chief Executive Health

- Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections is delighted to deliver its first Disability Action Plan.
- The plan is based on the voices and feedback of tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people and their whānau, reflecting a commitment to a "Nothing about us without us" approach.
- This plan works to ensure that tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people have access to services, engage in society, and lead meaningful lives.
- The plan acknowledges the need for a culturally safe environment for tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people managed by Ara Poutama Aotearoa.
- Priority areas of action are established to achieve aspirations and reduce barriers for tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people and their whānau.
- The plan is developed with reference to the Waitangi Tribunal and the Hauora Inquiry, emphasising self-determination and the design of inclusive health and disability services.

- It also reflects the responsibility and commitment to the relationship between Māori and the Crown, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi), Hōkai Rangi—Ara Poutama Aotearoa Strategy 2019-2024, and the voices of the disability sector and tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.
- The plan adopts a strength-based approach and represents the beginning of addressing inequities experienced by tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.

About the Ara Poutama Aotearoa Disability Action Plan 2023-2027

- New Zealand government aims to improve the wellbeing of all New Zealanders and their whānau, including disabled people.
- Approximately one in four (24%) New Zealanders identify as disabled.
- Māori are overrepresented among the disabled population, both in prison and in the general population.
- Tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people have reported discrimination and barriers in accessing health, disability, and social services.
- High-quality health and disability support services are crucial in prison to address health disparities and

inequities and to ensuring continuity of care upon reintegration into the community.

- The Washington Short Set of Questions on Disability (WGSSQ) was added to the Updated Health Assessment (UHA) in June 2022, providing valid data on the number and functionality of disabled individuals in prison.
- Initial data suggests a higher proportion of disabled Māori individuals in prison compared to the general population.
- Māori are also disproportionately represented in the Corrections system and addressing the over-representation of Māori is a key part of our organisational strategy Hōkai Rangi: Ara Poutama Aotearoa Strategy 2019-2024.
- The development of the Disability Action Plan involved the input of tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled individuals with lived experience, their whānau, key stakeholders, government agencies, and the broader disability sector.

Definition of disability

- Disability is a term covering personal impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions.
- It can arise from various causes such as accidents, injuries, congenital conditions, genetics, long-term conditions, and health issues.

- Disabilities can be visible or hidden, affecting mobility, learning, communication, and more.
- The definition of disability used by the Ministry of Health and General Census relating disability funding criteria. Disability relates to self-perceived limitations in activity due to long-term conditions or health problems.

Social Model of Disability

- This plan adopts the social model of disability, which means that barriers faced by disabled people stem from society rather than their own impairments or differences.
- Disabled people developed the social model to better understand and address their personal experiences of disability and promote inclusiveness in society.

Tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people

- In New Zealand, we use the term disabled people.
- The rationale behind using "disabled people" is that people are people first, with impairments such as vision impairment, hearing loss, or limited mobility.
- The barriers and limitations present in the world we live in disable them, making them "disabled people" due to external factors rather than their personal attributes.

- When specifically referring to disabled Māori individuals, the term "tāngata whaikaha Māori" is used.
- For the entire disabled population, the term "tāngata whaikaha Māori/Disabled people" is used.
- The term "tāngata whaikaha" reflects determination and aspiration to achieve goals and create opportunities for people with disabilities, aligning with their aims and ambitions.
- This information is based on the Māori Disability Action Plan "Whāia Te Ao Mārama" for the period 2018-2022.

Whānau

- Whānau, traditionally associated with family connections, now has a broader meaning.
- Whānau can include people who enhance a person's wairua and mana.
- Whānau include friends, social connections, or work colleagues.
- The key focus is on individuals who contribute to a sense of belonging for a person.

Mātauranga Māori

- Mātauranga Māori is the knowledge and understanding of everything seen and unseen handed down from tupuna Māori.

- It includes knowledge, experiences, and values of Māori in spiritual and physical ways.

The Treaty of Waitangi—Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- Cultural identity, including language, whānau, cultural principles, practices, and land connections, is very important to how tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people live their lives in Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pakeha.
- Ara Poutama Aotearoa has a responsibility under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to address inequities experienced by Māori and protect their health and well-being.
- The Disability Action Plan is guided by important documents and findings, including the 2017 Waitangi Tribunal report and the Hauora report on the Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry (2019).
- The Waitangi Tribunal highlighted the importance of Māori self-determination in the design, delivery, and monitoring of health and disability services.
- Ara Poutama Aotearoa is committed to supporting the relationship between Māori and the Crown and ensuring the appropriate use and respect for mātauranga Māori.

Hōkai Rangi—The Ara Poutama Aotearoa Strategy 2019-2024

- Hōkai Rangi and Te Ara Poutama represent growth, potential, and transformation.
- The whakataukī "Kotahi anō te kaupapa; ko te oranga o te iwi" guides the work, focusing on the wellness and wellbeing of people.
- Hōkai Rangi promotes an oranga-centred approach, humanising and healing environments, holistic health, and partnership with Māori.
- Alternative approaches and partnerships are sought to improve reintegration and rehabilitation outcomes for Māori and all managed by Ara Poutama Aotearoa.
- The strategic direction of Hōkai Rangi guides the Disability Action Plan.
- Te Tiriti responsibilities are acknowledged, including actively protecting Māori interests, fair treatment, involving Māori in strategy development, and working in partnership with Māori communities.
- Involving Māori to a greater extent is crucial for enabling rangatiratanga and achieving strategy objectives.

What tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people in prison have told us

- In 2021, Ara Poutama Aotearoa conducted a survey to hear the voices of tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.
- Tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people shared their experiences of life in New Zealand prisons.
- They provided feedback on what is working, what needs improvement, and where services can be enhanced.
- This feedback influenced the focus and actions of the Disability Action Plan.

The survey showed that things are already working well in some areas

- They are generally seen by a nurse within 24 hours of arriving at a site
- Some people felt they have never been as well informed about their disability
- They find that doctors and nurses in prison are supportive and responsive.

The survey also highlighted areas where it's important that further work is done

- Bed linen, mattresses, and cells are not accessible
- Responses to requests for support are not always timely
- A lack of access to appointments and programmes presents missed opportunities for preventing worsening health and wellbeing.

We know that there is room for improvement across a number of areas, including

- Have better promotion and prevention of potential health issues
- Better communication about what support needs people might have when they are transitioning back into the community or transferring to another prison
- Increased physical accessibility within prisons
- Have a better understanding of the wider impacts of disability, greater choices in quality services, and supports that meet specific disability needs.

What tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people released from prison have told us

- These stories are based on interviews with a tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled person who were in prison.
- They also include interviews with the whānau of another tāngata whaikaha/disabled person who was in prison.
- These stories have been anonymized to protect privacy.
- These stories contributed to shaping the actions and focus of the Disability Action Plan.

Kingi's story

- Kingi (fictitious name), a 22 year old young man, was in prison for about a year.
- He has a learning difficulty, very low literacy, impaired cognitive functioning, and limited English language communication skills.
- Kingi didn't fully understand what was happening when he entered prison or during court process.
- Some guards treated him poorly, but he was used to such treatment from authority figures and relied on his friends for protection.

- Kingi doesn't recall doing in any classes, courses, or meeting with any education, employment, or case management people
- He felt that things were not explained to him properly, and he didn't feel comfortable asking questions.
- Kingi would pretend to understand important things, he relied on his friends to fill in the gaps.

Tony's story as told by his whānau

- Tony's whānau (fictitious name), were not told about his arrest and court process until after he had been sent to prison.
- Tony was living in supported independent living accommodation and had a support worker, but they were not aware of his situation.
- His whānau believes that Tony may not have understood what was happening and would have followed authority figures without questioning.
- The whānau wanted Tony to receive appropriate support specifically tailored for disabled people, rather than generic support.
- They feel that Tony experienced negative incidents but was unable to communicate them to staff effectively.
- Tony didn't know how to book in to see the nurse or doctor at the health centre and believed that the guards' instructions could not be questioned.

- No positive contact with Tony's whānau happened during his journey.
- He could have potentially avoided having a criminal record with early action.
- His whānau highlighted the need to talk to families about prevention and support to change outcomes for people with disabilities.

Our Disability Action Plan is built on a number of important pillars

- The Disability Action Plan focusses on improving outcomes for tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.
- The plan is aligned with the Hōkai Rangi strategy.
- It provides guidance for immediate and short-term actions to support the wellbeing, goals, and aspirations of tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.
- It is also built on:
 - **The Treaty of Waitangi** as the founding document of Aotearoa and guides collaboration with iwi, hapū, and whānau to meet the needs of tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people and their whānau.
 - The **Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022** aims to achieve equitable health outcomes for all New Zealanders, especially Māori.

- The **Corrections Act 2004** requires that the standard of health care in prisons is reasonably equivalent to that available to the public.
- The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008 (UNCRPD)** ensures that all individuals with disabilities have equal human rights and freedoms.
- Ara Poutama Aotearoa has obligations under international human rights law and the **Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights** to provide appropriate treatment for tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people in prison and community management.
- Ara Poutama Aotearoa is committed to accessibility and has signed the **NZ Government Accessibility Charter**, promoting accessibility in leadership and providing accessible information to the public.

There are a number of key changes across the country which support our Disability Action Plan

- It is important to recognise other key changes that have recently happened in the wider health and disability sector that have provided the platform for our Disability Action Plan to rest upon. These changes include:

- The establishment of Whaikaha, the Ministry of Disabled People, which aims to create a partnership between the disability community and government, driving transformation in the disability system based on the Enabling Good Lives approach.
- The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 provides guidance for government agencies to work towards a non-disabling society, where tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people have equal opportunities to achieve their goals.
- Whakamaua, the Māori Health Action Plan 2020-2025, emphasizes the need for the health and disability system to be guided by Māori mana motuhake and work towards achieving Māori health equity.
- Whāia Te Ao Mārama is a culturally anchored approach supporting Māori with disabilities and their whānau.
- Faiva Ora, the National Pasifika Disability Plan 2016-2021, focuses on improving the lives of Pacific disabled people and their families.
- Te Aorerekura, the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, provides a collective path for various stakeholders, including tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people, to address family violence and sexual violence.
- The Ara Poutama Suicide Prevention and Postvention Action Plan (SAP) 2022-2025 aims to proactively

respond to the issue of suicide, recognizing its potential impact on tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.

An Enabling Good Lives approach underpins our Action Plan

- Ara Poutama Aotearoa recognises the importance of people being part of whānau and community systems, giving effect to engagement, trust, authenticity, reciprocity, and transparency.
- The approach of Enabling Good Lives (EGL), co-designed by tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people, their whānau, and support providers, promotes the use of community services and supports to increase choice and control in their lives.
- The principles of EGL will be adapted and applied within the context of Ara Poutama Aotearoa, considering the unique environment of prisons.
- The principles of EGL include:
 - self-determination
 - beginning early
 - person-centred
 - ordinary life outcomes
 - mainstream first
 - mana enhancing

- ease of use
- relationship building.
- These principles aim to empower tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people to be in control, promote self-management and interdependence, tailor supports to individual needs, facilitate everyday life in inclusive settings, access mainstream services first, recognize and respect abilities and contributions, provide simple and flexible supports, and strengthen relationships within the community.

Key focus areas of the Action Plan will lead to better outcomes for tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people

- Key focus areas for the plan have been identified based on input from tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people, their whānau, previous action plans, and the EGL framework adapted for Ara Poutama Aotearoa.
- Focusing on these areas will lead to outcomes that support and empower tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people in Ara Poutama Aotearoa's management.
- These outcomes include:
 - equitable access and choices

- mana enhancing practice for all tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people
- tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people leading and participating in decision-making "Nothing about us without us".
- These outcomes will be measured through the achievement of specific actions and through ongoing feedback and engagement with tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.

Our Focus Areas

- Focusing on these areas will result in outcomes that support and empower tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people in Ara Poutama Aotearoa's management to live better lives.
 - National Leadership
 - Using evidence to make a difference
 - Responding to disability support needs
 - Developing the workforce
 - Research and evaluation
 - Working with tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people and their whānau

Disability Action Tracker

- The Disability Action Plan includes immediate and short-term actions and each action has a specific timeline for completion.

Immediate Actions 2023-2024

The actions we will work to deliver by 2024 include commitments to:

- Set up an advisory group for disability support across Ara Poutama Aotearoa
- Include the Washington Short Set of Questions on Disability (WGSSQ) into all health screening tools by the end of 2023 and make sure correct ethnicity data is collected.
- Create Te Reo, Easy Read, large print, and New Zealand Sign Language versions of the Disability Action Plan.
- Create Social Worker Disability and Older Persons roles that facilitate and navigate access and continuity of care for tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people and their whānau.

Short Term Actions 2024-2027

The actions we will work to deliver by 2027 include:

- Develop a framework for early intervention for working with people who have high and complex needs to reintegrate into the community.
- Set up an 0800 number or online site for whānau of tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people to access appropriate support from providers, government agencies and/or community groups
- Support all new staff to receive Disability Awareness Training, and that current staff complete regular refresher courses
- Give staff access to NZ Sign Language (NZSL) training and supports
- Set up a volunteer network of site disability champions. Talk with tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people and other stakeholders about how to do this.
- Create a plan to ensure accessible facilities, systems, and processes with tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.
- Build relationships with disability service providers. Get the input of tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people and their whānau, to assist the advisory group in supporting the implementation of the Disability Action Plan.

- Link into regional groups to fix barriers for disabled people in prison and create new ways of working.
- Hold a hui every two years, starting in 2024 for tāngata whaikaha Māori, their whānau and service providers.
- Have our advisory group link into and advocate across Ara Poutama Aotearoa work programmes, to ensure that resources and focus are put on tāngata whaikaha Māori/disabled people.
- Support people doing research into neurodiversity and tāngata whaikaha Māori in their funding applications to external funders. This will include a focus on supporting Māori research and evaluation methodology.

Find the full action plan here:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic_report_s/disability_action_plan_2023_2027

Contact us here:

Website:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/about_us/getting_in_touch

Phone: (04) 460 3000

Email: info@corrections.govt.nz

**End of Ara Poutama Aotearoa Disability Action Plan
2023-2027**