

# Submission form

**February 2025**

This document is a summary of the [discussion document](#).

It is part of work to stabilise the Disability Support System (DSS). Later work will focus on strengthening DSS.

The full discussion document (and a summary), as well as all the consultation details are available on our website: [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/consultation](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/consultation).

This form includes consultation questions for you to respond to.

You can choose which questions you want to answer as part of your submission.

## How to make a submission

The consultation is open from Monday, 10 February until Monday 24 March 2025 (at 5pm).

You can make a submission by:

- completing the submission form and emailing it to:  
[DSS\\_submissions@msd.govt.nz](mailto:DSS_submissions@msd.govt.nz)
- completing an online survey at:  
[www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/consultation/complete-a-survey](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/consultation/complete-a-survey)
- mailing your submission to:

c/o Disability Support Services  
Ministry of Social Development  
PO Box 1556  
Wellington 6140:

## How to make an NZSL submission

Please email [NZSL\\_submissions@msd.govt.nz](mailto:NZSL_submissions@msd.govt.nz) for more details if you would like to send us an audio or video response.

# Topic 1: Improving the way the needs of disabled people are assessed, and how support is allocated

This covers proposed changes to the way peoples' needs are assessed and how decisions are made about what supports they receive.

It includes assessments through a Needs Assessment Service Co-ordination (NASC). Enabling Good Lives (EGL) assessments are not included.

## Make sure there is a consistent approach to needs assessment

**Question 1:** What changes can you suggest that would ensure the assessment tool and process is fair, consistent, and transparent? You might for instance wish to suggest it is: done in a different place; in person, or not; that it be supported differently; or that you receive different information about it before or after the assessment occurs.:

### Add your answer here:

- Assessments should be based on an unbiased opinion from the disabled person, rather than their carer, unless necessary.
- The assessment should be conducted by professionals with expertise in the relevant disability area or by someone who knows the person well.
- The process should be disability-dependent, with the option for the disabled person or their carer to undertake the assessment.
- If an assessment is declined, there should be an option to refer the case to a GP or other relevant professionals.
- Using the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) framework, the disabled person should have control over the pre-assessment process.
- A support team should be available to assist in achieving the desired outcome, taking a holistic approach and considering the broader context, including peer support.
- There should be different levels of assessment, with options to involve others where appropriate.
- Assessments should be conducted in person by a suitably qualified professional to ensure accuracy and care.
- Disabled people should have the opportunity for someone to speak on their behalf or provide additional information if needed.
- The assessment tools should be flexible, allowing for multiple methods to assess needs effectively.

## Improve how the assessment tool reflects the diversity of disability

**Question 2:** What information does the assessment tool need to gather about you and your circumstances to ensure it can identify the support you need?

**Add your answer here:**

- A detailed understanding of personal and family circumstances, including:
  - Family support available
  - Presence of multiple disabilities
  - Life experiences, including hidden disabilities
- The assessment should take a holistic approach, considering the person's entire situation, including family dynamics and geographic location.

## Assess the needs of family/whānau and carers

**Question 3:** Do you support the needs of carers being specifically assessed alongside those of the disabled person? Why/Why not?

**Add your answer here:**

Emphatically yes. Please refer to the response to Question 2 for further details.

**Question 4:** What considerations in respect to a carer's situation should be taken into account in order to link them to, or provide, the support needed?

**Add your answer here:**

A holistic approach should be used, incorporating:

- Depression screening questions to assess carer well-being.
- Identifying how carers can take breaks and access respite support.
- Connecting carers with support networks.
- Acknowledging both the mental and physical health of carers.

## **Make sure the services and support a person receives continues to meet their needs**

**Question 5:** How often have your needs and services / supports been reviewed or reassessed?

**Add your answer here:**

- Review frequency varies case by case, but more frequent reviews would be beneficial.
- Funding should not be affected while an assessment is pending.
- Individual circumstances, such as long wait times for medical appointments, should be considered.
- Flexibility should be built into the process, ensuring that assessments align with medical deadlines.
- Significant life events should trigger a reassessment in a timely manner.

**Question 6:** What changes to your circumstances do you think should mean a review or reassessment of your services / supports would be needed?

**Add your answer here:**

- There should be a hotline or emergency line for urgent assessments due to significant life changes, similar to MSD emergency support.
- Self-determination should be a key factor in deciding when reassessments are necessary.

**Question 7:** How often do you think your services / supports need to be reviewed or reassessed? (For instance, every year, every two years, every three years, or every five years.)

**Add your answer here:**

- A case-by-case approach should be taken, with options for reviews every 1, 2, or 5 years, depending on individual needs.
- Reviews should be linked to an individual's support plan.
- There should be a mutually agreed-upon schedule, with provisions for emergency assessments.

## Helping you access support that isn't available through DSS

We propose that NASCs identify supports that are available through other agencies and provide guidance on how these can be accessed.

This will help ensure that DSS is only used for the supports that are not provided elsewhere.

**Question 8:** What information or support might NASCs provide that will help you access the services, beyond DSS, that you might be eligible for?

**Add your answer here:**

- Providing clear information and guidance on available services.
- Outreach initiatives to ensure rural and isolated communities can access support.

## Topic 2: Accessing flexible funding, and how it can be used

There are two 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 can't be funded using flexible funding.**

**Question 9:** Do you prefer Option 1 (link flexible funding to the person's plan, with oversight of how it is used) or Option 2 (adjust current lists of what can and can't be funded using flexible funding)? Why?

**Add your answer here:**

- A combination of both options would be ideal.
- Funding should be linked to the plan, with clear oversight on its usage.
- Guidelines should clarify what funding can and cannot be used for, ensuring transparency.
- There should be clear 'yes' and 'no' categories, with flexibility based on individual needs.
- Case studies should be provided to illustrate the application of funding in different scenarios.
- Option 2 could be too restrictive, as disabilities vary widely.

**Question 10:** Do you have any suggestions on how flexible funding can be used to allow disabled people and carers as much choice, control and flexibility as possible, while still providing transparency and assurance the funding is being used effectively, and is supporting outcomes?

**Add your answer here:**

- A hotline should be available for quick updates to funding plans when needs change.
- The process for adjusting funding should be straightforward and easy to navigate.
- Funding should be as flexible as possible within reasonable parameters.

## Introduce criteria to access flexible funding

**Question 11:** Do you support the introduction of criteria for receiving flexible funding? Please let us know why, or why not?

**Add your answer here:**

- Yes, but discretion should be allowed based on individual circumstances.
- A portion of funding should remain flexible to accommodate unforeseen needs.

**Question 12:** Which of the following criteria for receiving flexible funding do you agree or disagree should be included and why? (Choose all that you think should apply.)

**12a.** Use of flexible funding is part of an agreed plan and linked to a specific need.

**Agree/Disagree**

Why/Why not?

**Add your answer here:**

- Plans should enhance quality of life and include contingencies.

**12b.** Disabled people and/or their family / whānau / carers are able to manage the responsibilities of flexible funding.

**Agree/Disagree**

Why/Why not?

**Add your answer here:**

- Agree, as a whānau-centred approach ensures culturally appropriate support.
- Not all communities have equal access to services, especially in rural areas.

**12c.** Flexible funding will be used to purchase a service or support that DSS provides through its contracted services/supports, that will address a person's disability-related support, and there is an advantage to using flexible funding to purchase it (such as greater flexibility for scheduling, it is closer to where the person lives etc).

**Agree/Disagree**

Why/Why not?

**12d.** Flexible funding will address a service gap, where the service is not otherwise available, or suitable for the individual.

**Agree/Disagree**

Why/Why not?

**Add your answer here:**

Agree, as this allows tailored choices for individuals in different locations.

**12e.** The cost of the support or service that will be funded is not more expensive than other ways to get that support.

**Agree/Disagree**

Why/Why not?

**Add your answer here:**

Funding should allow disabled individuals to fairly compensate those who provide necessary care and support.

**12f.** The flexible funding will enable the person to purchase or access a service that is expected to reduce a person's future support needs.

**Agree/Disagree**

Why/Why not?

**Add your answer here:**

This is an ideal outcome; however, it may not always be achievable.

**Question 13:** Can you suggest other criteria for accessing flexible funding in addition to, or instead of, those above? If you have suggestions, please explain why you think they will be helpful for those who are accessing flexible funding.

**Add your answer here:**

- Criteria should consider the unique needs of individuals, with room for discretion where necessary.
- The process should remain adaptable to accommodate diverse and evolving needs.