



## Education Report: Attendance at the Ministerial Leadership Group meeting – 23 June 2021

<b>To:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Cc:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	21 June 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1262392
<b>Drafter:</b>	Matt Frost	<b>DDI:</b>	04 439 4505
<b>Key Contact:</b>	Rose Jamieson	<b>DDI:</b>	9(2)(a)
<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose

This paper provides you with advice to support your attendance at the Ministerial Leadership Group on Disability Issues on Wednesday 23 June 2021 from 3.15-4.15pm.

### Recommended Actions

We recommend you:

- Agree** that this briefing be proactively released after this meeting.

Agree/Disagree

  
Rose Jamieson  
Deputy Secretary  
Parent Information and Community Intelligence

21/6/2021

  
Hon Jan Tinetti  
Associate Minister of Education

22/06/2021

## Background

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1. The Ministerial Leadership Group co-ordinates the Government response on disability issues. It is key to the successful implementation of both The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN Convention) and The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 - 2026 (the Disability Strategy).
2. Twice a year, the Ministerial Leadership Group meets with the Independent Monitoring Mechanism (the IMM). The IMM was established in accordance with Article 33 of the UN Convention. This requires governments to establish an independent way in which governments could be held to account for their implementation of the UN Convention.
3. The IMM is made up of:
  - The Human Rights Commission
  - The Office of the Ombudsman
  - The Disabled Persons' Organisations Coalition - Blind Citizens New Zealand, the Disabled Persons' Assembly, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Deaf Aotearoa, Kāpo Māori Aotearoa, Balance New Zealand (the DPO Coalition)
4. The Ministry meets regularly with all representatives of the IMM and hosted a meeting with members of the DPO Coalition on Wednesday 9 June 2021.
5. Topics discussed at the meeting included:
  - updating the DPO Coalition on progress in implementing the Learning Support Action Plan
  - seeking their perspective on the Literacy and Numeracy strategies
  - undertaking consultation on possible legislative proposals relating to monitoring of professional learning and development, the disciplinary procedures of the Teachers Council, and school board elections
  - seeking feedback on the Review of Interventions for students with the highest levels of learning support need.
6. The Ministry has an ongoing and strong working relationship with all members of the IMM.

## Ministerial Leadership Group meeting – 23 June 2021

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7. You are scheduled to attend the Ministerial Leadership Group which will be held on Wednesday, 23 June 2021 between 3.15 - 4.15pm.
8. You have been invited in your delegated capacity as Associate Minister of Education with responsibility for both the Learning Support Action Plan and for maintaining relationships with disability organisations.

9. The meeting will discuss:
- progress made by agencies and best practice in implementing the Accessibility Charter
  - the improvement of the collection and analysis of administrative data as it relates to disabled people
  - updating New Zealand's process on implementing the UN Convention.
10. You have requested a Ministry official support your attendance at this meeting. Matt Frost Principal Advisor - Lived Experience, will attend the meeting with you. Matt has a longstanding relationship with all civil society participants at the meeting and experiences autism.

## Advice on agenda items

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### **The Accessibility Charter and Ministry of Education**

11. The Accessibility Charter was developed by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) in early 2018. The Accessibility Charter is a whole-of-government approach to ensuring a commitment to accessible information.
12. The Secretary of Education signed the Accessibility Charter on behalf of the Ministry of Education in July 2018.
13. The Accessibility Charter invited the Ministry over the next five years to:
- meet the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard and the Web Usability Standard, as already agreed, by 1 July 2017
  - ensure that our forms, correspondence, pamphlets, brochures and other means of interacting with the public are available in a range of accessible formats including electronic, New Zealand Sign Language, Easy Read, braille, large print, audio, captioned and audio described videos, transcripts, and tools such as the Telephone Information Service
  - comply with accessibility standards and requirements as a high priority including deliverables from Ministry vendors
  - respond positively when our customers draw our attention to instances of inaccessibility in our information and processes, and work to resolve the situation
  - adopt a flexible approach to interacting with the public where an individual may not otherwise be able to carry out their business with full independence and dignity.
14. The Ministry's Disability Working Group oversees and monitors the Ministry's progress towards the implementation of the Accessibility Charter. This group is an internal working group consisting of disabled employees. The group has identified IT, communications, and procurement champions at a senior level to ensure ongoing commitment to implementing the Accessibility Charter.
15. The Ministry provides input to MSD every six months on progress for a report that is provided to Minister Sepuloni as Minister for Disability Issues.



16. The Ministry meets the Web Accessibility and Usability Standards with regards to its website. However, we are aware that our websites can be very challenging to use (particularly the main public facing one). We are examining ways we can go beyond the standards to improve ease of use for disabled people.
17. The Ministry has a good working relationship with the accessible formats service run by MSD. We have used the service to create accessible formats for a range of Ministry engagements when the core audience is disabled people such as consultation on the Learning Support Action Plan.
18. There is an increasing understanding within the Ministry about the importance of using accessible formats. Two challenges the Ministry faces when using accessible formats have been:
  - a clear understanding of when it might be appropriate to best use accessible formats, as well as capacity issues around the ability of these formats to be provided (as they are often being developed by Non-Government organisations on top of their day-to-day work)
  - having a consistent approach taken across the organisation, and the Ministry is developing a translations and formats policy. We would welcome any advice from the IMM around appropriate practice for this work.

#### **Improving the collection and analysis of administrative data**

19. A long-standing issue for disabled people has been a lack of robust data collection and analysis of administrative data to inform better outcomes. The IMM has continued to raise concerns about this. They are particularly concerned that agencies are using a variety of definitions of disability to inform their data collection – thereby making it difficult to obtain consistency in both data collection and analysis.
20. The IMM will note they have undertaken work to address this data gap in forums such as the Disability Data and Evidence Working Group. This forum meets three times a year to discuss how to improve data collection and the formation of evidence. The Ministry is represented on this working group.
21. The IMM work suggests that the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on disability (the Short Set) coupled with the increasing use of the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) should be accepted by agencies as a way to standardise the collection and analysis of administrative data related to disabled people.
22. The Short Set is a list of six questions which captures the range of difficulties people might encounter in everyday life. The Short Set was used to identify disability in the 2018 Census and is becoming increasingly accepted as a proxy for the definition of disability in New Zealand.
23. There are some concerns that the Short Set does not fully capture impairments which may not be physical in nature such as neurodiverse impairments. There is a longer set of additional questions which cover a wider range of impairments.

24. Up until recently, there was little systematic data reported about the experiences or outcomes of disabled learners in the education system. The Ministry has published two recent reports on the experience of disabled learners in early learning and schooling, and in the tertiary system. These reports used data obtained from the 2013 Disability Survey and provide a useful baseline for understanding the educational experience of disabled learners.

25. The Ministry's Education Data and Knowledge group (EDK) wishes to increase data collection using the Washington Group Short Set and the IDI. An advisory group chaired by the Deputy Secretary EDK is considering a proposal that would use the IDI to report on a range of education outcome measures for disabled learners, as well as potentially create the basis for ongoing regular reporting. These indicators could be incorporated into other relevant reporting, including against the NZ Disability Strategy, the Statement of National Education Learning Priorities and Tertiary Education Strategy, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

#### **Updating New Zealand's progress on implementing the UN Convention**

26. As part of international obligations under the UN Convention, New Zealand is required to be examined by the International Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Committee) every four years. New Zealand's last examination under this process was 2014.

27. The Committee is significantly behind in its examination of States. This was due to difficulties in meeting due to COVID-19 as it is very challenging for examinations of this type to be done virtually. We are currently not clear when the next examination for New Zealand by the Committee will be undertaken.

28. The IMM are concerned about the significant time lag that affects their ability to systematically monitor implementation in New Zealand which is part of their mandate.

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9(2)(g)(i)

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9(2)(g)(i)

34. The Ministry will provide you with further advice should an examination go ahead in October 2021.

## Annexes

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Annex 1: Talking points