

Disability Services Provider Newsletter

Launch of the New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline

The death of teenager Casey Albury-Thomson 10 years ago sparked a revolution in the world of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and caused New Zealand to look at how best to support people with ASD and their families/whanau.

One of the outcomes was the New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline (NZ ASD Guideline) that was released in April on the inaugural World Autism Awareness Day, April 2. Work on the Guideline began in 2002 and included a large number of contributions from the health, disability and education sectors, and from Maori and Pacific peoples. There was a wide collaboration on the development of this unique and ground-breaking document.

“The ASD Guideline is based on a novel approach in the way it covers so many different aspects of ASD in the one document. There is nothing quite like it anywhere in the world”, says Project Manager Tracey Moore. The Guideline covers the whole life span of ASD and aims to make sense of conflicting and complex information by providing accessible information for those with ASD as well as for their families and whanau, their employers, teachers and health professionals.



L-R: Pamela Henry, MoH; Alison Hearn, MoH

It includes information on how to identify and diagnose ASD, how to explain to families and individuals about the diagnosis, the best way to support those with ASD and how to keep them healthy. It covers learning and teaching strategies and support around a number of areas including communication, social interaction and anxieties. The Guideline also looks at Maori and Pacific peoples' perspectives.

“The New Zealand Autism Spectrum Guideline is all encompassing and it is thanks to the passion and dedication of the people involved, that the project has succeeded”, says Tracey. “Work has already begun on how to implement the recommendations in the Guideline”.

Funding of \$18.16 million has been allocated for work in this area over the next four years. In the meantime, the full Guideline, as well as a summary version, are available at www.moh.govt.nz/autismspectrumdisorder or through Wickliffe, moh@wickliffe.co.nz.

DDG Update

Geraldine Woods

Deputy Director-General
Health and Disability National Services Directorate



The last month has seen some milestones achieved in improving services and support for disabled people and their families.

On April 2, the inaugural World Autism Awareness Day, the NZ ASD Guideline was launched. This is the culmination of five years hard work and it will help improve outcomes for people with ASD and their families. It is through the dedication and commitment of many people that we now have this ground breaking document and I would like to thank all those who have a part in this achievement.

On April 28 the Hon Ruth Dyson launched the Carers Strategy and five-year Action Plan. The Strategy and Action Plan aims to address some of the issues that impact on the thousands of New

Zealanders who assist friends and family members who need help with everyday living.

Sector engagement remains high on our agenda and we are looking at how we can continue to improve this. The added-value our Consumer Consortium brings to projects and planning continues to be recognised with the next meeting expanding to a third day to try and accommodate the many people seeking input. This is a good reflection on the expanding role consumers have in planning and developing the services we fund.

Finally I am delighted to say our Disability Services DVD is nearly complete and will be launched on May 27. This has been an exciting project that has provided many technical challenges. All worth it for a multi-lingual, fully accessible DVD.

Regional DHB Meetings re ESS

A series of meetings with DHBs are currently being planned to discuss various aspects of Equipment and Modification Services. Topics for discussion with key service managers include:

- funding of Equipment and Modification Services;
- use of new funding announced in Budget 2007;
- assessor accreditation;
- ongoing engagement and communication.

Date	Host	Venue	City/Town
13 May	Hutt Valley	Trentham Racecourse Corporate Boxes	Upper Hutt
15 May	Canterbury	5th floor Board Room, Princess Margaret Hospital	Christchurch
16 May	Otago	Octagonal Room, 1st floor, Dunedin Hospital	Dunedin
19 May	Nelson Marlborough	M.E.S.I Room, Waller Street, Murchison	Murchison
22 May	Mid Central	DHB Board Office, Gate 2B, Heretaunga Street	Palmerston North
23 May	Tairāwhiti	Gisborne - DHB to arrange	Gisborne
28 May	Waikato	Bryant Centre	Hamilton
29 May	Waitemata	Park Lane Motor Inn, 2 Rewiti Avenue, Takapuna	North Shore

Formal letters of invitation to these meetings and accompanying information packs have been sent to the DHBs and meetings will be held during May. If you require any further information please contact Sue Primrose on (04) 496 2294.

Carers recognised through Strategy launch

“A Strategy and five-year Action Plan to support carers is a major step towards valuing their immense contribution”, says Social Development and Employment Minister Ruth Dyson.

The New Zealand Carers’ Strategy, launched on April 28 by Ruth Dyson, is supported by a five-year Action Plan to begin addressing some of the issues that impact on the thousands of New Zealanders who assist friends and family members who need help with everyday living because of ill health, disability or old age.



L-R: Anna Butler, MSD; Laurie Hilsgen, Carers NZ; Kylie Clode, MoH; Jo Esplin

During extensive consultation carers said they needed help in learning how to protect their own health and wellbeing, better access to breaks and support that enables them to balance their caring role and employment

The Carers’ Strategy is a joint initiative between the Government and the New Zealand Carers Alliance, a network of 45 non-governmental organisations.

In the 2006 Census, 419,334 or 13.3 per cent of the New Zealand population aged 15 years and over reported looking after an individual who is ill or has a disability. Of those carers, 12 per cent are 65 or older.

The Government’s vision for carers in New Zealand is that:

New Zealand Aotearoa is a society that values individuals, families, whānau or aiga who support others who need help with their everyday living.

This will be achieved when:

- ⇒ carers have choices and opportunities to participate in family life, social activities, employment and education
- ⇒ carers’ voices are heard in decision-making that affects them.



L-R: Hon Ruth Dyson; Joan Hughes, Carers Australia; Laurie Hilsgen, Carers New Zealand

“The Action Plan will help to deliver a vision for carers over the next five years, and together with the Strategy will offer them more choices and a stronger voice in issues that affect them”, said Minister Dyson.

This strategy is an important first step in acknowledging carers and the very real difference they make in people’s lives. Improving support for informal carers is important for developing strong healthy families and meeting future challenges of providing care.

Staff movements

Tina Berkett, Senior Planning Advisor, Wellington

Tina has been seconded into the position of Senior Planning Advisor. Tina was previously the Executive Assistant for the Southern Operations Team.

Amanda Bleckmann, Contract Relationship Manager, Auckland

Amanda is on 12 months maternity leave.

Karla Powell, Contract Relationship Manager Auckland

Karla was previously the Contract Analyst for Northern Operations. She is covering the Auckland region in Amanda's absence.

Morgan Stephenson, Contract Analyst Northern Operations, Wellington

Morgan was previously a Business Analyst within the Business Support Team. He is covering the Contract Analyst role in Northern Operations for the next 12 months.

Julia Arnold, Contractor, Wellington

Julia started in April with the Business Support Team.

Martin Anderson, Project Manager, Wellington

Martin started in January with the Business Support Team.

Padma Kumar, Financial Analyst, Wellington

Padma moved from Dunedin to the Wellington office on 5th May

Jane Greer, Executive Assistant Southern Operations has been contracted to provide executive assistance to the Southern Operations Team.

Sarah Chattin, Executive Assistant Planning & Development has been contracted to provide executive assistance to the Planning and Development Team.

Staff departures

Manase Lua, Project Manager Pacific left Planning & Development, Disability Services in March 2008. Manase has moved to a mainstream NGO called Te Pou - The National Centre of Mental Health Research and Workforce Development. Manase made a significant contribution in the area of development of disability services for Pacific peoples. A replacement is currently being recruited.

Patrick Labotsky, Senior Planning Advisor remains with the Ministry of Health but has left Disability Services to take up the position of Team Leader Business Planning and Reporting in the Information Directorate.

Prema Mani, Contract Relationship Manager left Southern Operation, Disability Services in April 2008. Prema has moved to another section within the Ministry, Public Health. A replacement is currently being recruited.

Kim Chappel, Executive Assistant Business Support, left the Ministry in April 2008. Kim decided to go travel overseas for a while. Karen Jones has temporarily been appointed to the role.

New staff

Pamela Henry

Development Manager
Children & Youth Services



I started in the role in December 2007 and have been seconded from my role as Team Leader in the Kidz First Homecare Nursing Service, Counties Manukau DHB.

I worked in neonatal nursing for many years both in NZ and Australia and developed an interest in community care for babies. This developed into a passion to work with child and youth services and as a result I have engaged with Disability Support Services in many contexts.

This role is exciting and challenging. I have portfolios that work across sectors - both within education and with CYF. This is work that I love.

I have a sea kayak which I like to take out when the weather (and time) permits. A recent highlight was when my research was published in the NZ Nursing Organisation Centennial Magazine. I was awarded a monetary prize which I used to take myself and my daughter to Australia for two weeks.

Marsha Marshall

Development Manager
Home & Community Services



I joined the Planning and Development Team in Disability Services in February this year.

I have been in New Zealand since 1999, when I emigrated from Canada. When I first arrived I worked at Starship Hospital and started a respite care programme for parents of medically fragile children - called Family Options. From Starship, I went to Waitemata DHB. After eight years at the DHB it was time for new challenges, so I joined the Ministry of Health.

I was previously the Service Manager for Community Services for Older Adults and Home Health before joining Disability Services.

I grew up in the Canadian Rockies and continue to enjoy the outdoors in New Zealand, scuba diving whenever I can. I can often be spotted riding around Auckland on my very distinctive pink Harley Davidson motorbike!



Harvey Steffans

Manager Business Strategy

I joined the Health & Disabilities National Services Directorate as Business Strategy Manager in January this year.

I have a background in policy and analysis, funding, performance assessment, and information management in the central government portion of the health and disability support sector.

I am borderline incompetent at driving a cellphone and do not have a computer at home. Recreationally, I enjoy the outdoors though my recent experience of increasing gravity and anxiety have led me to abandon the mountain slopes for the more supportive environment of lakes and oceans.

Home and Community Support Services

A joint project by the Ministry of Health and ACC has resulted in a plain English service specification for Home and Community Support Services. The new name, Home and Community Support Service Specifications (HCSS), acknowledges access to community activities and links the service specifications to the NZS Home and Community Sector Standard.

The new specification was introduced in August 2007, with the intention that all providers are meeting its requirements by 31 July 2008. New plain language principles were also attached to the service specification.

The HCSS is an outcomes-based framework that focuses on supporting a person's individual goals through collaborative processes between the person, assessors, and providers. There is new opportunity for flexibility as well as common reporting and monitoring for Disability Services and ACC. A reporting template is currently being developed in collaboration with Disability Services, ACC, and Providers.

Disability Services and ACC home based service providers, including members of New Zealand Home Health Association (NZHHA), service users, Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASCs) and ACC social rehabilitation assessors have all been involved in, and will continue to work together in the Implementation Reference Group. Shared training of ACC, NASC, Disability Services staff and providers has been delivered to 18 centres. Very positive feedback was received from participants on this initiative. A training resource package is being developed for ACC Assessors, NASCs and providers to use, and will be widely distributed by the end of April.

Also relevant to home based providers is the implementation of the Ministry funded NASC national information system, Socrates which is now live. Socrates will provide more comprehensive information about people who access HCSS.

Ministry of Health Publications

Unless other wise specified, you can obtain copies of all Ministry of Health publications from:

Ministry of Health, C/O Wickliffe Limited, PO Box 932, Dunedin

Tel: (04) 496 2277 (Wellington)

Fax: (03) 479 0979 (Dunedin)

Email: moh@wickliffe.co.nz

Publications are also available on our website: www.moh.govt.nz

If you would like any information about the articles contained in this newsletter or to comment please contact Tina Berkett on:

Email: disability@moh.govt.nz

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