
Housing for Disabled People:

Family/Whānau and Close Supporter Perspectives

Key Findings and Recommendations

1/23

Aotearoa New Zealand is a signatory of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (UNCRPD).

This means the New Zealand Government has agreed to implement the Convention's provisions, monitor progress, and report back to the Convention's Committee on **various issues affecting disabled people** (Article 33).

In 2018, the Donald Beasley Institute (DBI) was commissioned by the Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) Coalition to **independently monitor the housing experiences of people with complex disabilities through the perspectives of their family, whānau and close supporters.**

Articles 19 and 28 of UNCRPD recognise that disabled people have the “right to live in the community with choices equal to others” and the “right to an adequate standard of living.”

Key Finding 1:

Many families felt they had little to no choice or control over housing and support at home. Adequate financial resources and knowledge of how to navigate the system increased their sense of choice and control.

Key Finding 2:

There are not enough affordable and accessible houses within the housing market, including private and social housing (Kāinga Ora).

Key Finding 3:

Some family members experienced a lack of support, fatigue, ongoing anxiety, and concern for the wellbeing of the disabled person they were caring for.

Key Finding 4:

Women tended to be the primary caregivers of people with complex disabilities. The gendered nature of care can result in a compromised standard of living for both the disabled person and the caregiver.

Key Finding 5:

Negative attitudes towards disability held by people in positions of power, such as builders, housing developers and property managers, created additional barriers to housing for disabled people and their families.

Key Finding 6:

Enduring, positive, and consistent relationships with service providers and support workers played a significant role in the wellbeing of disabled people and their families.

Key Finding 7:

A lack of accessible housing and in-home support meant that some younger people with complex disabilities were placed in aged-care facilities.

Key Finding 8:

Funding for housing modifications is limited and does respond to disabled people's changing needs over time.

Key Finding 9:

Even though families felt access to the community was important, lack of affordable and accessible housing meant it could not be prioritised.

Key Finding 10:

There was disappointment that the UNCRPD had resulted in little change for people with multiple and complex disabilities.

Key Finding 11:

Collective action and peer support were identified as important and powerful strategies for advocacy.

Recommendation 1:

Embrace a kaupapa Māori approach to ensuring people with complex disabilities can enjoy adequate housing and living conditions.

Recommendation 2:

Take a life-long approach to improving housing and living conditions that includes family and whānau members as co-designers.

Recommendation 3:

Increase the universal design quota of Kāinga Ora new builds and incentivise accessible housing in the private rental market.

Recommendation 4:

Engage family and whānau members of people with complex disabilities in funding allocation processes.

Recommendation 5:

Increase in-home support services and provide age-appropriate care for people with complex disabilities.

Recommendation 6:

Prioritise disabled people and their families and whānau in accessible Kāinga Ora houses.

Recommendation 7:

Address the inequalities between MoH and ACC funding models.

Recommendation 8:

Provide sufficient financial support for families and whānau, including single-parent families, who are caring for disabled children or adults.

Recommendation 9:

Update the Building Act (2004) and Building Code to align with the UNCRPD, including accessibility standards for private housing.