

My Experiences My Rights

Report: disabled people's experiences of housing in Aotearoa New Zealand



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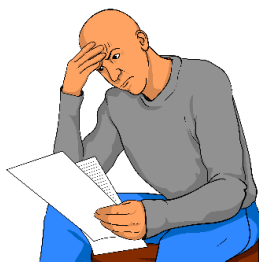


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Before you start



This is a long document.



While it is written in Easy Read it can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time
- have someone help you to understand it.

Introduction to the report



Everyone in New Zealand has the right to a home.



We do not know enough about what it is like for disabled people finding a home that meets their needs.



To find out more about this the Donald Beasley Institute did some research.



With the support of the **Disabled People's Coalition** we have written a report called:



**My Experiences, My Rights:
A Monitoring Report on Disabled
Person's Experience of Housing in
Aotearoa New Zealand**

In this document we will call it **the report**.



This document talks about:

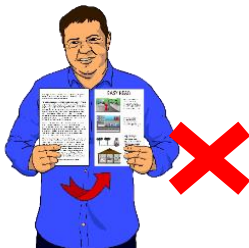
- what the report is
- the main things the report found out.



You can find the full report at:

www.peoplefirst.org.nz

The full report is:



- a very long document
- not in Easy Read.



The **Disabled People's Coalition** is also called **the DPO Coalition**.



The DPO Coalition is a group of Disabled People's Organisations.



The DPO Coalition is where DPOs can:

- talk to each other
- have a strong voice on issues that affect disabled people.



The DPOs that belong to the DPO Coalition are:



- Balance Aotearoa
- Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated
- Deaf Aotearoa
- Disabled Persons' Assembly New Zealand Incorporated
- Kāpō Māori Aotearoa New Zealand Incorporated
- Muscular Dystrophy Association of New Zealand Incorporated
- People First New Zealand / Ngā Tangata Tuatahi.

Housing is a human right



Everyone has the right to live somewhere that:

- is safe
- means they can live a good life.



The right to good housing is part of lots of human rights agreements New Zealand has been part of.



These agreements have been with lots of other countries.

Some of the agreements have been around for more than 60 years.



One of these agreements is the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**



The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** says what governments must do to make sure disabled people get the same rights as everybody else.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is also called the **UNCRPD.**



New Zealand agreed to the UNCRPD in 2008.



It is important to know if disabled people in New Zealand are getting the rights the UNCRPD says they have.



Checking how well New Zealand is keeping to the law about human rights is called **monitoring**.



The report is part of monitoring.



The DPO Coalition made sure that the research was:

- led by disabled people
- included information about what disabled people:
 - think
 - experience.





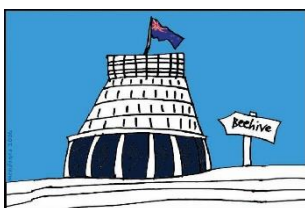
The DPO Coalition chose the Donald Beasley Institute to work on the monitoring.



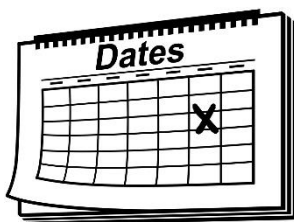
The DPO Coalition wants this report to:



- show how things are for disabled people
- to show that it is very important things change so disabled people get their right to good housing.



The DPO Coalition wants to work with the government to change things.



That needs to happen soon.

How the research was done



The kind of monitoring we used is called **Disability Rights Promotion International**.

Disability Rights Promotion International is also called **DRPI**.



Some changes were made to DRPI to make it a good fit for monitoring in Aotearoa New Zealand.



In New Zealand DRPI is based on:

- Te Tiriti of Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi
- the UNCRPD
- the New Zealand Disability Strategy and Action Plan.





In this research DRPI monitoring was used to find out about the experiences disabled people in Aotearoa New Zealand had of housing.



It was important that the research was done by disabled people.



We hired 26 disabled people to do the interviews.

We call these people who did the interviews **monitors**.



We trained the monitors in how to do:

- research
- monitoring.



The monitors interviewed 61 disabled people.

We call the disabled people who were interviewed **interviewees**.



The interviews:

- took 12 weeks to be done
- happened in:
 - Northland
 - Auckland
 - Christchurch
 - Otago
 - Southland.





The reason for the interviews was to understand what:

- parts of housing are working for disabled people
- parts of housing are not working
- disabled people think about the homes they live in now
- kinds of homes disabled people would like to live in in the future.



We made recordings of what the interviewees said.

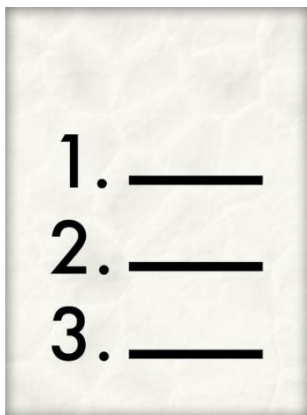


We used what the interviewees told us to write our report.

What the research found out



This part of the document is about the things we found out in the research.



We put them into 6 groups which are:

1. Choice and control
2. Access
3. Belonging
4. Safety
5. What disabled people know about their rights
6. Other things interviewees talked about

1. Choice and control



It is important for disabled people to:

- be able to make their own choices
- have control over their lives.

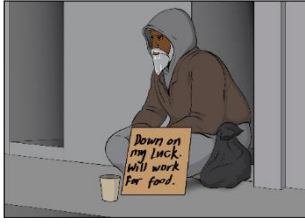


These ideas were an important part of the things most interviewees said about their lives.



In the interviews disabled people said they did not have much:

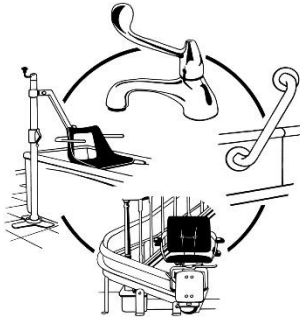
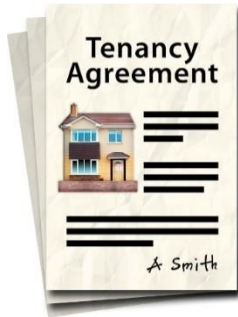
- choice when trying to get the housing they needed
- control over how they lived.



The things the interviewees said about their lives showed:

- the ways it had been hard for people to get the housing they needed
- how it was harder to have a good live because they did not have much choice about:
 - where they lived
 - who they lived with.





2. Access

Access means things like :

- getting somewhere to live
- making changes to a home to meet the needs of the people who live there
- information
- ways of making sure people get their rights.

A lot of interviewees said the biggest cause of access problems was the way the people thought about disabled people.

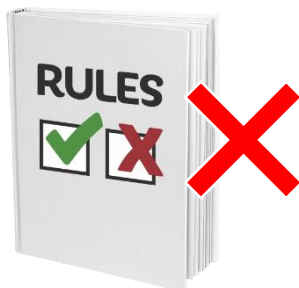


The interviewees said the access problems meant

- they have bad health because of the stress
- living in places that were not good enough
- not have a home at all.



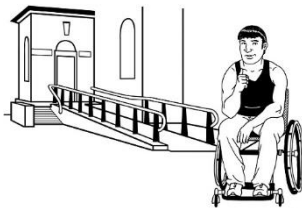
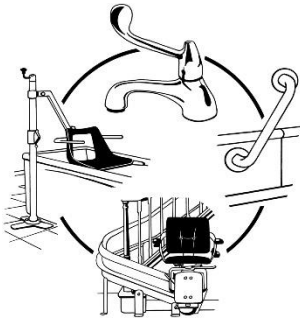
The cost of housing also made it harder for many people to get the housing they need.



Some interviewees did not meet the rules about who gets funding to make their homes more **accessible**



Some interviewees did not have money to pay to make their home more **accessible**.



If your home is **accessible** it means you can do the things you need to do in it safely.

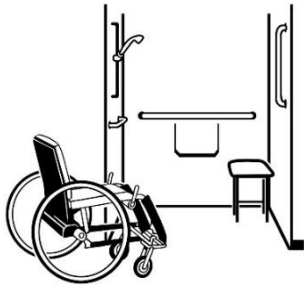
For example if you use a wheelchair your home might be made more **accessible** with a ramp to the door.



People found it hard to use the law to get their rights because the forms they had to fill in were hard to understand.



They worried that if they tried to get their rights landlords would cause problems for them.



3. Belonging

Belonging means how well people felt they:

- were comfortable at home
- had a home that was set up for them
- were part of their community.

Some interviewees said:

- they liked spending time at home
- their disability meant they had to spend a lot of time at home.



Some of the interviewees said they did not feel they belonged at home because of things like:

- their home not being accessible
- the size of their home



- cold
- damp
- mould.



A lot of the interviewees said that their home not being accessible meant they could not safely be part of things like:

- cooking
- cleaning
- gardening.



Another part of belonging is the relationships the interviewees had with:

- the people they lived with
- their neighbours
- their community
- **online communities.**



Online communities are communities that meet on the internet.



People who had good relationships often also had good access in their:

- home
- community



People who did not feel they belonged also found it hard to find enough money for the things they needed.



This meant they could not choose:

- where they lived
- who they lived next door to
- who they lived with.



This made them feel:

- alone
- that they did not belong.



A lot of the interviewees who lived in **Kāinga Ora** communities said they had bad relationships with other people in those communities.



Kāinga Ora is the new name for
Housing New Zealand



This made them feel they did not belong.



Some interviewees said that online communities made them feel they belonged.

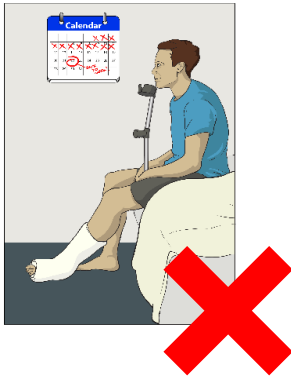


But they also said that the cost of internet can make it hard to be part of online communities.

4. Safety

Safety means both:

- physical safety
- psychological safety.



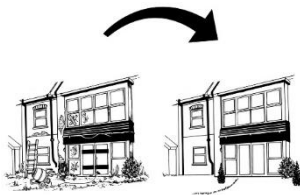
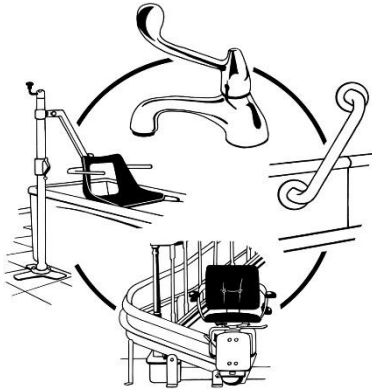
Physical safety means things being kept safe for your body.



Psychological safety means things being kept safe for your mental health.



Safety was an important part of good enough housing.



People who had physical safety were more likely to have:

- changes made to their home to make it more accessible
- good heating
- repairs done well.



Some of the interviewees said their homes were cold.

They said that part of the reason was how much electricity cost.



Living in cold homes made some people ill.



Some people said that to pay their electricity bills they had to:

- go without things they needed like food
- turn off their heaters.



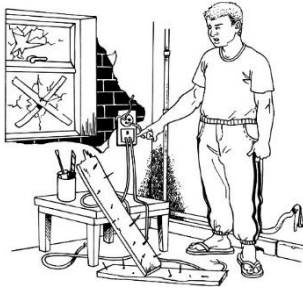
Lots of people said the reason for many of the things being unsafe was landlords who:



- did not do repairs
- did not get back in touch when interviewees asked for things.



Lots of people have problems getting landlords to fix things but these are a big problem for disabled people.



Lots of interviewees said there were things that made them unsafe:

- in their homes
- near their homes.



Things that were not safe included:

- ways out of buildings
- steps
- kitchens not being accessible
- bathrooms not being accessible
- **overcrowding.**



Overcrowding is when there is not enough space for all the people living in a home.

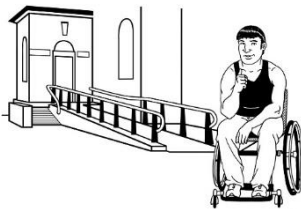


Some people were worried about how to get out of their home in an emergency like a fire.



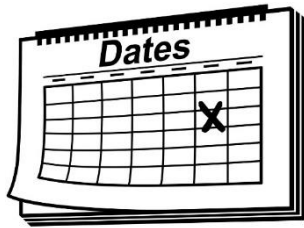
Psychological safety is also very important.

Some of the things that helped with having good psychological safety were:



- where the home was
- how well people could get into their home
- making their own choices about where they live.





Many interviewees said they had to agree to rent a home for just a short amount of time.



When that time was finished they had to have the landlord agree to them renting their home again.

This sometimes happened a lot of times for example every year.



This meant the landlord could decide:

- not to let them stay each time the agreement ended
- to put the rent up every time they made a new agreement.



This caused people a lot of stress.

5. What disabled people know about their rights



We wanted to find out how much interviewees knew about their rights.

The interviewees were asked if they had heard of:

- the UNCRPD
- **Universal Design.**



Universal design is when things are designed well for both:

- disabled people
- everyone else.



About half of the interviewees had not heard of:

- the UNCRPD
- Universal Design.



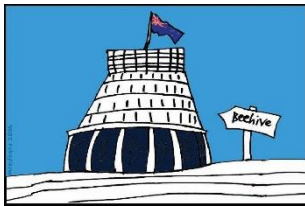
Monitors then read out 2 parts of the UNCRPD.

They asked the interviewees to talk about what those parts of the UNCRPD meant to them.



Even though many interviewees did not know about the UNCRPD before most of them:

- understood what rights they should have
- said the government is not doing enough to make sure disabled people have the housing they need.



6. Other things interviewees talked about



Many interviewees said housing was hard for a lot of people.



They said it was not just disabled people who are finding getting housing hard.



The UNCRPD says that things are much harder for disabled people.



Having a home to live in was often connected to:

- what kind of jobs people had
- how much money people had
- how much money people could get to make their homes more accessible.





Some interviewees talked about the big differences between funding from:

- ACC
- the Ministry of Health.



People who get funding from ACC get a lot more.



This means that:

- disabled people are not treated equally
- some disabled people have more access to the housing they need than other disabled people.





Interviewees felt they had to **compromise** a lot.

When you **compromise** it means you get some of the things you want but have to decide not to get other things.



People felt they had to choose between things like:

- being safe

or

- living in a house they had enough money to pay for.



One interviewee was worried that if a problem with their housing got sorted something else would be taken away from them.

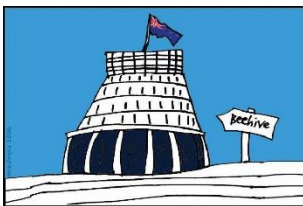


Monitors asked interviewees how they would like to be living in 5 years time.

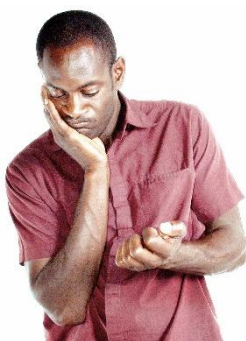
People said they wanted the things that the UNCRPD says are their rights like:



- having a fair standard of living
- safe homes
- good relationships with their landlords.

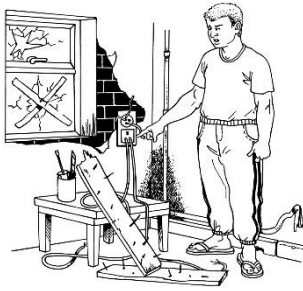


Most interviewees did not trust the New Zealand government when it came to their rights.



A lot of interviewees were very tired because they had to fight for their rights as well as living with disability.

Final thoughts



This report shows:

- how housing is a problem for a lot of disabled people
- how disabled people do not get their human rights
- a lot needs to be done to make things better.



Disabled people should know:

- what their rights are
- be able to say what needs to change.



There are a lot of ways disabled people can be an important part of making things better for disabled people in Aotearoa New Zealand.



**DPO
COALITION**

**Donald Beasley Institute. (2020).
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Monitoring Report on Disabled
Person's Experience of Housing in
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Disabled People's Organisation
Coalition.**



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