**DISABILITY WORKING GROUP**

**Key Messages January 2025**

Members: John Marrable, Kirsten Dixon, Paula Waby, Adam Hall, Jacqui Eggleton, Jaime Randhawa, Adam Hall, Te Aroha Aratangi, Philippa Henderson

Standing members: Kathryn Harkin, Isabelle Jenkins

Apologies:

The Disability Working Group members met on Friday 17 January 2025

* Jackie onto Head Trust Board for CCS Disability Action
* Actions updates:
* Hidden Disability Sunflower – staff are continuing to be trained, currently waiting for the security team to complete.
* Isabelle Jenkins, Well South attended the meeting. Isabelle works in Health Equity Team at WellSouth. WellSouth recognised the importance of a focus on disability as they hadn’t done this in the past and have now developed their own action plan. This plan sits under the Health NZ Southern Disability Strategy. In 2024, a steering group was established with 7 community members and 4 WellSouth staff. Over mid 2024, a rapid engagement phase was undertaken with over 20 community groups including advocates. They are aware that they didn’t meet with everyone but did have a wide range of engagement mechanisms. They loosely based this on the three goals in strategy.
* Key aspects of the plan include:
* WellSouth will have a role dedicated to disability in health equity including planning, delivery and evaluation of different programmes.
* They will prioritise listening and responding to community, this was a key aspect that came from engagement. They will also involve consumers in the process, as per Code of Expectations.
* They will aim to strengthen primary care services – creating a general practice tool kit for primary care providers including a policy as well as resources for those in general practice. This also includes looking at what already exists and how they can find these. Also want to do an audit of accessibility in general practice, both physical and non physical aspects.
* Ensuring that WellSouth is an accessible and appropriate organisation for tangata whaikaha to work at and that there is an equitable hiring process and that there is training for staff on induction. Audit and accessibility review of their premises as well.
* In December Action plan went through the Senior Leadership Team and Board for approval which was successful. Isabelle has connected with 2 other Primary Health Organisation to speak with equity leads who appear to be the only people who are doing focused work in this setting. They have also prioritised ensuring that all those they engaged with are the first to hear about it. Isabelle has 1 day a week dedicated on this work, and Andrew Sise will also be supporting the initial implementation. Has been meeting with others and building connections and currently working on a framework for the implementation.
* Reflection that the steering group members appreciate the return to update on the plan and felt positively about this plan.
* John updated the members on a regional discussion with Kathy O’Neill from Regional. Te Waipounamu Chairs and Kathryn and Kathy attended. West Coast has a Disability Steering Group but they weren’t able to attend. Nelson Marlborough and South Canterbury do not have groups currently. Accessible health information project being worked on currently with health information being stored in one location with Health NZ in accessible formats.
* Members discussed the distinction between mental health and disability – a fine line that can be challenging to delineate.
* Round Table
* Interim shuttle still running in Waitaki while they wait for St John. Stronger Waitaki still exists, just changing scope.
* Your Way Kia Roha success through engaging with businesses in Southland championing EGL Principles and encouraging employment.
* Disabled parks in Oamaru are working well particularly as very busy currently.
* Privacy issue at Oamaru hospital recently struggling with catheterisation – no covering up or dignity provided
* A new Donald Beasley Institute Health Research project has commenced for people with learning disabilities.
* Instead of Blind Citizens Network, they are going back to being a branch which means they will have more status when they go to organisations with particular questions etc. Now enough interest to have a committee which is very positive.