

Final Update – August 16, 2021

Kia ora koutou

This morning the Board and others welcomed Peter Reynolds to the position of Chief Executive, and I wish him every success in the role. – his contact details are:

[peter@nzdsn.org.nz](mailto:peter@nzdsn.org.nz)

Mobile: 0275346472

Here are some reminders and information:

1. **Flexible Disability Support (FDS)** – NZDSN is now waiting for feedback from the Ministry of Health following a series of meetings and workshops on this topic. Information will be shared once it is available.
2. **Residential Pricing Model –** an initial strategic meeting was held with the Ministry last week. Further information will be shared with members as it becomes available.
3. **Registration for the 2022 Christchurch IIMHL & IIDL Leadership Exchange is now open!** This five-day event will take place the week of 28th February with the Matches being hosted across New Zealand and Australia on Monday 28th February and Tuesday 1st March. The Matches will be followed by the Network Meeting, which commences with a pōwhiri at the Te Pae Conference Centre in Christchurch, New Zealand at 5.00pm on Wednesday 2nd March, and continues with the Network Meeting sessions on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th March. Go to the [IIDL website](https://www.iimhl.com/2022-christchurch-iidl) for more information.
4. **Training and Workforce Development Fund** – another reminder - The Training Fund is available to staff members of organisations contracted by the MSD National Office to provide employment, participation, and inclusion services for people with disabilities. NZDSN administers this fund on behalf of MSD. People can apply for assistance from this fund throughout the year. Click [here](https://nzdsn.org.nz/training/) for further information.
5. **The next Board meeting** is this week on Thursday August 19 in Christchurch.
6. **End of Life Choice Act –** I have recently met with the Ministry of Health team on this issue. They have provided me with the following information and asked that I share it with you.

## **The End-of-Life Choice Act 2019 Implementation**

* Assisted dying will be legal in New Zealand from 7 November 2021, which is a year after the 2020 referendum results on the End-of-Life Choice Act 2019 (the Act) were announced.
* The introduction of assisted dying means that a person with a terminal illness who meets the eligibility criteria can request medication to relieve their suffering and end their life.
* The Act sets out the legal framework and a high-level process for accessing assisted dying, including strict eligibility criteria and safeguards.
* A person cannot receive assisted dying solely because they are suffering from a mental disorder or mental illness, have a disability, or are of advanced age.
* Assisted dying is not a replacement for palliative care or health care services more generally. It provides another option for people with a terminal illness in certain circumstances.
* The Ministry of Health will be responsible for the Act and has an implementation programme underway to implement the assisted dying service.
* The service will become part of the existing health and disability system and there will be continuous quality improvement activities. It will be important to ensure the service puts people and their whānau at the centre, uses effective safeguards, and is accessible to those who meet the criteria under the Act.
* Assisted dying remains illegal until 7 November 2021.

Further information about the Act and the implementation work programme can be found on the Ministry of Health’s website: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/end-life-choice-act-implementation>

You can also sign up for the Ministry’s newsletter about the implementation for regular updates: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/end-life-choice-act-implementation/end-life-choice-act-implementation-updates>

**Information and guidance for the health and disability sector**

* Health and disability service providers are encouraged to start planning and preparing for when assisted dying services become available.
* The Ministry is creating a range of resources to support health professionals and health and disability service providers to prepare for when assisted dying becomes available.
* Attached are four information sheets that may be of particular interest to disability workforce and providers. These are a general information sheet about the Act and assisted dying for health professionals, plus an information sheet, a checklist, and a set of scenarios for health service providers to help support planning and preparations.

   

* Further information, guidance and training resources can be found in Learn Online, including recordings of webinars about various aspects of the assisted dying implementation. <https://learnonline.health.nz/enrol/index.php?id=470>
* People working in the health and disability sector can log in or make an account to access these resources by following the instructions.
* You can find The End-of-Life Choice Act 2019: Overview e-learning module about assisted dying in Learn Online. <https://learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=444> Health practitioners and others in the health workforce are strongly encouraged to complete this module. It can be completed as an individual, or it can also be used by health service providers as part of team or group learning tools.
* The Ministry is currently developing a presentation that is aimed at the unregulated workforce that can be used to provide support learning about assisted dying in team or group settings. This will be available soon in Learn Online.
* The Ministry of Health is also developing guidance to support health and disability service providers create policies that may be needed if someone in their care requests assisted dying from 7 November 2021. Providers will be able to tailor this guidance to their own context and level of involvement in providing assisted dying services.
* Health practitioners who are interested in providing assisted dying services, or people in the health and disability sector who are working on planning related to the introduction of assisted dying services are invited to sign up for the Ministry’s Assisted Dying Workforce Forum, which will be held in Wellington on 29 and 30 September.  <https://confer.eventsair.com/moh/register/Site/Register>

I think that covers the key issues and developments for now. I have enjoyed the last few weeks keeping several projects moving forward and information flowing to you, our members. From Monday next week, I will be looking for more projects or engagements so I can continue to be of service to the sector in the future. If you are aware of any possibility or opportunity where I might be of assistance, please contact me on 0274984262 or [matthews117d@gmail.com](mailto:matthews117d@gmail.com).

I would like to thank Sue, Sara and Mireille for their support and assistance over the last 8 weeks – they have been great to work with. Best wishes to you all for the future which will no doubt continue to be full of challenges and churn but hopefully rewards as well.

**Ngā mihi,**

**David Matthews,**

**Interim CE**

**NZDSN**