

## NZDSN Newsletter 31/01/2024

Welcome back if you're just getting back into it! Plenty happening in our world, so let me summarise...



### Some things of interest...

- Pharmac has expanded access to COVID-19 antiviral treatments for people who are vulnerable to severe illness following COVID-19 infection, including disabled people and people with one or more severe health conditions that have resulted in severe frailty or vulnerability. The changes reflect feedback received from patients and carers, health practitioners, and Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People in response to a Pharmac consultation ending 21 August 2023 (15/11/2023). See <https://pharmac.govt.nz/>
- New Zealand Relay is a free telecommunication service which specialises in assisting individuals in our community who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or who have speech communication difficulties. Our users can utilise the service for everyday calls - connecting with friends/whanau, businesses, schools, retail shops, government organisations and more. See <https://www.nzrelay.co.nz/index>
- Stats NZ are pleased to give a sector update on how the collection of the 2023 Disability Survey has gone, and when to expect disability data releases from the Disability Survey

and the 2023 Census. See <https://www.stats.govt.nz/topics/disability>

### Our News:

- **No Christmas present for disability workers in Mini Budget**
  - The disability sector had hoped to see a commitment from the Government to fund pay equity for care and support workers in today's Mini Budget, but has been left empty-handed, says New Zealand Disability Support Network CEO Peter Reynolds. Go here for more <https://nzdsn.org.nz/no-christmas-present-for-disability-workers-in-mini-budget/>
- The NZDSN Board is presently revising our Strategic Plan, which we hope to present to members late in February
- Both NZDSN Chairperson Jonathan Mosen and I attended a brief meeting with new Disabilities Minister Penny Simmonds. The meeting was cordial and clearly demonstrated the Minister's interest in the portfolio. She has agreed to regular meetings and expressed a strong interest in receiving examples of areas where contracts and/or service specifications get in the way of disabled people not enjoying a good life. We have been compiling this from information from members and will present a number of examples to the Minister shortly.
- Finally, I have a meeting set up shortly with newly-minted opposition spokesperson for disability issues, Priyanka Radhakrishnan. As the

previous Minister, she is well-placed to put pressure on the government, but might find it a bit tricky defending policies she (or her government) created.



## Pay Equity

- As of 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023, we now have four pay equity claims on the table, three for care and support workers and one for front-line managers. The CSW claims now involve around 300 employers.
- CSW1 has been the subject of an independent review commissioned by Te Whatu Ora (the lead funder). One view is that it's because they don't like the size of the undervaluation and don't have the money to pay for it. The draft review report was open to submissions until 26<sup>th</sup> January. Employers and peak bodies responded saying the report validated their work, followed the legislation to the letter and advice received from the Public Service Commission. The final report is published in a few weeks' time – it is then we find out what Te Whatu Ora thinks about it. Meantime, this claim is stalled at milestone 5 of 6.
- CSW2 and 3 – the peak bodies are working on this, with an extension of time for CSW2 already applied and sector meetings being scheduled for the week beginning 19<sup>th</sup> February for employers to learn more about the process and what's in store.

- The Front-Line Manager's claim is also stalled while we await information from Te Whatu Ora.
- It is looking more and more likely that some sort of "negotiated sectors-wide settlement" will be put on the table for all the claims.



## Service Updates

- No news yet on a renewal of the MSD Training Fund. We hope to hear on this shortly.
- Whaikaha advised last year that they could not renew the EGL Leadership Programme run by humanly. We are seeking alternative means of funding this and will advise.
- A meeting was recently hosted by Whaikaha to outline the impact of the government's austerity programme of cuts. Whaikaha is not exempt from this, having to refund 6.5% across both operational and crown funding, on top of high sector expectations. There was little detail in the presentation, but more to come on this in the near future.



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