

**From:** [ODI \(MSD\)](#)  
**To:** Out of scope [@parliament.govt.nz](#)  
**Cc:** [i\\_request \(MSD\)](#); [Brian Coffey](#); Out of scope; [ODI \(MSD\)](#); [Julia Bergman](#)  
**Subject:** 2022 02 17 ODI Draft letter - From joint Ministers (Sepuloni, Little, Hipkins) following hui with DPO coalition [I] - Due COP 18 Feb  
**Date:** Thursday, 17 February 2022 1:10:23 pm

---

Kia ora Out of scope

Please see below draft letter developed by the Office for Disability Issues, Director Brian Coffey.

Ngā mihi

### Office for Disability Issues

Ministry of Social Development, 56 The Terrace | PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140  
*Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora | 56 The Terrace | PO Box 1556, Te Whanganui-a-Tara 6140*

Email: [odi@msd.govt.nz](mailto:odi@msd.govt.nz)

ODI: <http://www.odi.govt.nz> | [@NZ\\_ODI](https://www.facebook.com/nzofficefordisabilityissues)

Office for Disability Issues logo



To:

Chief Executives

Ministry of Health  
Ministry of Social Development  
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment  
Ministry of Education  
Accident Compensation Corporation

Tena koutou

The Covid-19 response continues to be an important issue and priority for disabled people.

It is important that there is effective engagement, information sharing, listening and planning with disabled people and their representative organisations.

In response to the issues and concerns that have been raised with us as Ministers we are asking that senior officials, taking a lead on the Covid-19 response, meet regularly with leaders from the disability community.

At this stage it is proposed that key officials in the Ministry of Health (the Covid response team and the Disability Directorate); the Ministry of Social Development; Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet; the Ministry of

Business, Innovation and Employment; the Ministry of Education and the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) come together to inform, listen and take action to ensure that the Covid-19 response is working for disabled people. This membership may be complemented by other officials depending on the issues being traversed. We would anticipate that issues which may be of initial concern will be Care in the Community initiatives (including Community Hubs); service continuity if the disability workforce is compromised by Omicron; the implications for disabled people in each stage of the traffic light system; and other topics that disabled people identify as important.

This is a difficult time for those priority communities who feel most at risk within the Covid-19 context. Disabled people are resourceful and resilient however they are currently lacking confidence that government agencies leading the Covid-19 response are working together and understand the needs of disabled people, and their family/whanau.

The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) can co-ordinate and facilitate these meetings as well as reach out to representatives from the disability community who are keen to be involved. We look forward to receiving updates from the meetings on the key issues and actions being take.

Please send directly to ODI (MSD) [Office for Disability Issues@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Office_for_Disability_Issues@msd.govt.nz) the key contact person in your agency.

Thank you for your work on this. Our overall Covid-19 response has avoided the high mortality rates experienced by disabled people in other jurisdictions and our vaccination rates of disabled people have been at similar rates to the vaccination rates for all New Zealanders. This is an opportunity to give confidence to disabled people and ensure that our focus on equity continues to include equity for disabled people.

Ministerial sign off

---

**From:** Out of scope [@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:>@parliament.govt.nz)

**Sent:** Thursday, 17 February 2022 9:44 AM

**To:** Brian Coffey Out of scope

**Cc:** Kerrie Morgan Out of scope; Sarah Fuhrer

Out of scope ODI (MSD) <[Office for Disability Issues@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Office_for_Disability_Issues@msd.govt.nz)>;

Out of scope i\_request (MSD) Out of scope

**Subject:** RE: Immediate feedback and actions from the hui on contingency planning and communications if Omicron impacts the disability work force capacity

Thanks Brian

In regard to the final point you've raised, I've run this past the office and they've asked if could please get a draft letter to the relevant parties (including ACC) from joint Ministers (Sepuloni, Little, Hipkins) ASAP, **COP tomorrow** doable?

Also, do you also have any advice as to how we best keep ACC at the table for meetings such as this given they are responsible for a significant part of the workforce? We will keep on top of Minister Little's office when it comes to this though any advice you may have would be

appreciated!

Thanks,

Out of  
scope

| **Private Secretary for Disability Issues**

Email Out of scope [@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Out of scope@parliament.govt.nz) Out of scope

Office of Hon Carmel Sepuloni MP, Minister for Social Development & Employment, Minister for Disability Issues, Minister for ACC and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

**Email disclaimer:**

Please note information about meetings related to the Ministers' portfolios will be proactively released (this does not include personal or constituency matters). For each meeting in scope, the summary would list: date, time (start and finish), brief description, location, who the meeting was with, and the portfolio. If you attend a meeting with the Minister on behalf of an organisation, the name of the organisation will be released. If you are a senior staff member at an organisation, or meet with the Minister in your personal capacity, your name may also be released. The location of the meeting will be released, unless it is a private residence. The proactive release will be consistent with the provisions in the Official Information Act, including privacy considerations. Under the Privacy Act 1993 you have the right to ask for a copy of any personal information we hold about you, and to ask for it to be corrected if you think it is wrong. If you'd like to ask for a copy of your information, or to have it corrected, or are concerned about the release of your information in the meeting disclosure, please contact the sender. You can read more about the proactive release policy at <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Proactive-Releases#MS>

This email communication is confidential between the sender and the recipient. The intended recipient may not distribute it without the permission of the sender. If this email is received in error, it remains confidential and you may not copy, retain or distribute it in any manner. Please notify the sender immediately and erase all copies of the message and all attachments. Thank you.

---

**From:** Brian Coffey Out of scope  
**Sent:** Thursday, 17 February 2022 9:22 AM  
**To:** Out of scope [@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Out of scope@parliament.govt.nz)  
**Cc:** Kerrie Morgan Out of scope; Sarah Fuhrer  
Out of scope; ODI (MSD) [Office for Disability Issues@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Office_for_Disability_Issues@msd.govt.nz);  
i\_request (MSD) Out of scope  
**Subject:** RE: Immediate feedback and actions from the hui on contingency planning and communications if Omicron impacts the disability work force capacity

We had representatives from the DPO Coalition about nine people (including Dr Tristram Ingham); representatives from the family/whana network (3 people); Paula Tesoriero (Disability Rights Commissioner); the Health and Disability Commission; Ava Fa'amoe from Tofa Mamao; Tania Kingi and Sione (Te Roopu Waiora Trust); the New Zealand Disability Support Network; MSD (Anne Hawker) four representative from the Ministry of Health, plus ODI.

---

**From:** Out of scope [@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Out of scope@parliament.govt.nz)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 17 February 2022 8:54 AM  
**To:** Brian Coffey Out of scope  
**Cc:** Kerrie Morgan Out of scope Sarah Fuhrer  
Out of scope; ODI (MSD) [Office for Disability Issues@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Office_for_Disability_Issues@msd.govt.nz);  
i\_request (MSD) Out of scope  
**Subject:** RE: Immediate feedback and actions from the hui on contingency planning and communications if Omicron impacts the disability work force capacity

Thanks Brian, could you please advise what other organisations reps were present further to the DPO Coalition?

---

**From:** Brian Coffey Out of scope  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 16 February 2022 5:52 PM  
**To:** Out of scope <[@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:>@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** Kerrie Morgan Out of scope; Sarah Fuhrer  
Out of scope ODI (MSD) <[Office\\_for\\_Disability\\_Issues@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Office_for_Disability_Issues@msd.govt.nz)>;  
i\_request (MSD) Out of scope  
**Subject:** RE: Immediate feedback and actions from the hui on contingency planning and communications if Omicron impacts the disability work force capacity

Kia ora Out of scope

Issues and outcomes from the meeting attended by about 25 people today. Note that ACC and DHBs were not able to attend.

A big thank you to the MoH for fronting up and listening

### **Issues/concerns/ideas for improvement**

- Significant hurt expressed, a number of times, by those participating in the hui, regarding the impact of the communications that had been sent to providers and clients about the risk of service disruption
- Acknowledgement that it is necessary to plan for the possibility of Omicron impacting the disability work force.
- Surprise that the communications sent to clients were not available in alternate and accessible formats
- A need to tighten up the messaging and to provide assurance not increase anxiety
  - There is a need to learn from previous work for disabled people during the pandemic, as noted in the IMM Report "Making Disability Rights Real in a Pandemic". - - Attention to previous learnings would have avoided the current difficulties.
- Planning needs to be based on an understanding and modelling of the level of disruption to the disability work force. ( It was indicated that modelling had indicated that there could be a 30 percent reduction to the disability workforce as a result of Covid Omicron)
- Concern that it needs to be understood that service disruption is something that is already experienced by many disabled people
- The need for continued attention to the enduring issues of service disruption as well as the need to address the service disruption that may be experienced by Omicron impacting the disability work force
- The need for ongoing monitoring when services are not provided and when disabled people feel at risk when services are not available or at risk of not being available
- Important to engage with disabled people to plan the service response if Omicron disrupts services
- The importance of government agencies to work together if there is service disruption rather than rely totally on family supports and natural

supports that may or not be available to the disabled person. A more holistic approach.

- Emphasise that changes that may be required to the availability of services and support, need to be in discussion and agreement with the disabled person and their family/whanau. This approach is a must do rather than making arbitrary service provider decisions.
- Note that family/whanau are tired and bating down in response to Covid and the Covid Omicron threat
- Don't assume that family and natural supports are available to all disabled people
- A question of what support or training might be available to those who may be involved in providing support if there is service disruption
- The need for this work to not be solely the responsibility of the disability directorate but that their advice is needed

### **Action and commitments**

- A commitment from the MoH to include the feedback from this hui in the service design planning and messaging on the possibility of service disruption
- Participants who had issues/ideas that they weren't able to contribute via the zoomie to send those to the MoH
- A commitment from MoH to engage with a smaller group of those present in the hui to progress the service design and communications with a check back with the larger group.
- MoH extended an invite of those in the hui to be involved in the disability community zoomies that had recently been reinstated
  - Participants to contact the MoH to offer further involvement
  - Note the need for all government agencies leading the COVID response to meet regularly with the disability community to ensure the needs and risks for disabled people are known and integrated into all Covid planning and responses, particularly the Care in the Community initiatives (including Community Hubs). Disabled people and the disability community need to be confident that the needs of disabled people and their family/whanau are well considered. Could ODI bring together representatives from – MoH Covid group, education, MSD, MBIE , to connect with disabled people on a regular basis. This may need Ministerial support.

Nga mihi

Brian

### **Te Tari Mō Ngā Take Hauātanga | Office for Disability Issues**

Ministry of Social Development | Aurora Centre, 56 The Terrace | PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140

ODI: <http://www.odi.govt.nz> | <https://www.facebook.com/nzofficefordisabilityissues> | @NZ\_ODI

(pronouns: [she/her](#))

Office for Disability Issues logo



----- This email and any attachments may contain information that is confidential and subject to legal privilege. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, dissemination, distribution or duplication of this email and attachments is prohibited. If you have received this email in error please notify the author immediately and erase all copies of the email and attachments. The Ministry of Social Development accepts no responsibility for changes made to this message or attachments after transmission from the Ministry. -----

---

----- This email and any attachments may contain information that is confidential and subject to legal privilege. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, dissemination, distribution or duplication of this email and attachments is prohibited. If you have received this email in error please notify the author immediately and erase all copies of the email and attachments. The Ministry of Social Development accepts no responsibility for changes made to this message or attachments after transmission from the Ministry. -----

---

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT