



UPDATE AND SUMMARY OF ACCESSIBILITY SYMPOSIUM 2022



Thank you to all of you who were able to attend our recent Accessibility Symposium. We appreciate you taking time to share your thoughts with us, and for your open and frank discussion.

The purpose of the symposium was to hear from you and inform key aspects of the review of our 2019 Accessibility Policy. Below is a high-level summary of that discussion. These discussion points will be considered as part of the policy review process.

What attendees raised in discussion



Across all four discussion topics, we heard the importance of listening to the lived experience of the disabled person and understanding their needs and aspirations. For some, being heard is hard, this means Kāinga Ora needs to work harder to listen.

Engagement needs to be appropriate, targeted, and meaningful. Every disabled person and their needs are unique. Kāinga Ora needs to consider the specific requirements of each person, their whānau, support people, and carers. By listening people get what they need – not what others think they need.

Kāinga Ora has a role in urban design - an accessible home is only one part of living well. An accessible home that is in the wrong place, or does not have the right connections enabling participation and links to whānau, support networks, amenities and the wider community disables the occupants. Kāinga Ora should consider:

- Access to regular public transport, and/or access to car parks for those who need them
- Creating accessible communities that enable everyone to be a part of their community including access to services and amenities, and social opportunities
- Acknowledge that people and their circumstances will change over time, explore ways to future-proof as much as possible

Scope – what should we aim to achieve under the new policy given the increase in Kāinga Ora scope to include urban and community development?

- Recognise the urgency for change and reflect this in the policy and goals
- Understand the barriers and challenges for disabled people and explore ways to address these
- Be clear about what success looks like
- Ensure connection and collaboration between government agencies and non-government agencies

Modifications – how can the modifications process be improved to support Kāinga Ora customers and what funding models might achieve the best outcomes?

- Not all disabilities are obvious – understand that specific needs may require bespoke solutions
- A single point of contact – remove the burden to navigate the modifications process between agencies from the disabled person and their whānau
- Understand the modified housing stock (public and private) and support people to find the right home, in the right location, with the right modifications – including those seeking to purchase modified homes
- Only allocate modified homes to those who need them
- Consider how to adapt to changing needs over time
- Be inclusive and ensure cultural needs are met in design and modification
- Think about accessibility outside of the home – being able to access from the front and the back of the property and having space for support animals if needed

Engagement mechanisms – how can we work with customers and stakeholders to ensure the voice of disabled people, tangata whaikaha Māori, tangata haoura are included in our accessibility work?

- Listen to those with disabilities, their whānau, carers and support people – prioritise the voice of the disabled person, particularly those who struggle to be heard
- Engagement needs to be regular and ongoing – always culturally appropriate and targeted when needed

- Consult and engage widely using different forums and formats
- Be honest, open and transparent in consultation
- Consider training to improve the understanding of people working with disabled people – understanding will support change and better outcomes
- Be conscious of engagement fatigue
- Be clear about how any information gathered through consultation will be used

Accessible homes and universal design – how can we maintain momentum and ensure the right homes are available to those with specific accessibility needs?

- Be aspirational on the universal design target – aim for 100% universal design of new properties. 100% universal design means disabled people can visit friends and relatives and have social connections outside of their home
- Use terms for universal design and accessible that are clear and consistent with definitions used by others
- Absolutely key areas for making homes more accessible include wider doorways, hallways, wet area bathrooms, no step access (engage with occupational therapists who are the experts in this area)
- Design for the future
- Universal design takes extra space but there are still storage needs for general life and specialised needs of disabled people – such as in bathrooms and for equipment such as wheelchairs
- Security matters – including fencing where required
- Be mindful of needs outside of main centres
- Connection to the community, amenities and services is important

Next steps

Work will continue on the review of the policy.

We will engage with smaller groups as we progress the policy work and test thinking.

We welcome any further feedback you may have and invite you to connect with us through the accessibility@kaingaora.govt.nz