

Feedback by

Hamilton City Council Staff

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT'S NATIONAL LOCAL AUTHORITY SURVEY ON ACCESSIBILITY

6 December 2019

It should be noted that the following feedback is from staff at Hamilton City Council and does not necessarily represent the views of the Council itself.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Hamilton City Council staff would like to thank the Ministry of Social Development for the opportunity to provide feedback on its National Local Authority Survey on Accessibility.
- 1.2 We have provided feedback on the survey questions that are of most relevance to Hamilton City Council.

2.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 2.1 Should the Ministry of Social Development require clarification of the feedback provided, or additional information, please contact Andy Mannering (Manager Social Development – Community Development) on 07 838 6465 or 027 220 3723, email andy.mannering@hcc.govt.nz in the first instance.

Yours faithfully



Richard Briggs
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

National Local Authority Survey on Accessibility

Overview

What is this survey about?

This online survey seeks to understand how well local authority policies and practices are working for disabled people, including disabled residents, children and visitors. It will help create a snapshot of the progress being made nationally by local authorities and any new innovations they are testing.

The survey has the support of Local Government New Zealand, and the Disability Rights Commissioner and Office of the Ombudsman have both also expressed interest in seeing the findings.

Why we are consulting

Having the right processes in place helps people access the opportunities and supports they need. Disabled people report that local government has a greater impact on their daily lives than central government.

Government's March 2007 commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([UNCRPD](#)) also apply to local authorities. This includes commitment to improvements in the provision of access to information, services, employment and self-determination in local communities throughout New Zealand. Many of these elements can be best delivered at a local level through advocacy by local government, community and business leaders.

Government agencies are also working to improve accessibility. The State Services Commission report on [Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service](#) provided a useful benchmark for improvement planning by government agencies and their Chief Executives.

The [Accessibility Charter](#), to which government agency Chief Executives have now committed, includes commitments by leadership for staff to be involved in training, to access and develop technical expertise, and to develop a resourced plan to make their information and services accessible within the next five years. Work is currently being undertaken to get local authority and district health board commitment.

The Local Government Act 2002 sets the framework through which local authorities operate. It doesn't set obligations specifically related to accessibility as it is inclusive of all residents, including those with disabilities.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 - 2026 ([NZDS](#)), and related Disability Action Plan, aims to improve outcomes for disabled people in the areas of:

- Education
- Employment and economic security
- Health and wellbeing
- Rights protection and justice
- Accessibility
- Attitudes
- Choice and control
- Leadership.

The Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) for reporting on progress on UNCRPD commitments includes looking at how well local authorities are delivering on these obligations.

This survey is developed to provide a snapshot of understanding of and progress on these obligations. It is intended to help local authorities accelerate their progress by sharing approaches that are working well for other local authorities.

Introduction

National Local Authority Survey on Accessibility

How well are your policies and practices meeting the needs of disabled people?

What is this survey about?

This online survey seeks to understand how well local authority policies and practices are working for disabled people, including disabled residents, children and visitors. It will help create a snapshot of the progress being made nationally by local authorities and their new innovations they are testing.

Why is it important?

Having the right processes in place helps people access the opportunities and supports they need. Disabled people report that local government has a greater impact on their daily lives than central government.

Government's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([UNCRPD](#)) also apply to local authorities.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 - 2026 ([NZDS](#)), and related Disability Action Plan, sets out to improve outcomes for disabled people in key areas.

The Local Government Act 2002 sets the framework through which local authorities operate. It doesn't set obligations specifically related to accessibility as it is inclusive of all residents, including those with disabilities.

In addition, work is currently being undertaken to get local authority commitment to the [Accessibility Charter](#).

How will the information be used?

This survey gives you a chance to share what you are doing, what is working well, what the barriers to progress are and what could make it easier to move faster.

The focus is on identifying and sharing practices that are working well in one area so that others can also use them. You are asked to provide links to examples of policies, planning, information and implementation that are meeting the needs of your disabled people so that others can see what has worked well.

The consequent report on this snapshot of accessibility will not identify individuals or individual local authorities.

The report will be available on the [Office for Disability Issues](#) website. The [LGNZ](#) website will also host the report, as well as your links to effective practice that will take viewers to your sites. Please do not include any personal or client information.

What else do I need to know?

We are seeking a range of perspectives. The survey is directed to the Chief Executives of all local authorities and we ask that the survey responses capture the perspectives of:

- Chief Executive and officials
- Elected officials
- Local disability communities.

Please gather your information and submit only one response from your local authority.

Please do not include any personal or client information.

The links you provide are to be shared as examples of what is working well.

The approaches you discuss may be

- population-based - approaches which seek to support inclusion of specified population groups (e.g. wheel-chair users, older people, Little People)
- community-based – approaches which seek to build inclusive communities, where the individual and collective needs of all are considered
- place-based – approaches which seek to optimise the potential of each location, reflecting the topography, services, opportunities and challenges present.

When is it due?

Please complete the online survey by **5pm on 6 December 2019**.

Instructions

Please gather your information and submit only one response from your local authority.

Please do not include any personal or client information.

The first question is to help us understand your context.

The remaining questions

- ask you to provide an overall assessment on a six-point scale, with 1 meaning poor through to 6 meaning outstanding
- invite you to provide links to examples of what is working well for you and/or to explain your response, and that you are willing to share with other local authorities. This is a chance for you to share your successes, raise any barriers you are facing and offer any suggestions you have for what could help. You can also share about innovations you are testing.

Where drop-down options are provided, please choose all that apply in each case. Please skip any aspects that do not apply to your local authority.

Process and Timeline

The survey will be open for 3 weeks from 18 November to 6 December 2019. The Office for Disability Issues will collate and analyse the results in early 2020. This will include discussion around any barriers that are holding back change and ideas for how these barriers could be eased.

These will be reported to the Minister of Disability Issues and shared with all respondents. Examples of practice that are working well will be shared so that others can adapt and adopt from these.

Please complete the survey and submit your responses by **5pm on 6 December 2019**.

Definition: Accessibility

Accessibility is good for us all; it benefits whānau, business, tourism, economic development, iwi, and health and wellbeing.

An accessible community is one in which everyone's rights are realised, where persons of all diversities, including those with different lived experience of disability or impairment, are treated with dignity and respect, and where they can access all places, services and information with ease and dignity.

It is a community in which the rights of disabled people are upheld, and where individuals, organisations and services are confident interacting with disabled people.

It is a community in which the eight outcome areas of the [New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026](#) are fully realised including the vision that:

New Zealand is a non-disabling society – a place where disabled people have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and all of New Zealand works together to make this happen.

An accessible community supports

- decision-making by disabled people, including participation in local authority processes, as well as self-determination
- access to information by, for and about disabled people, including disabled children
- access to services by disabled people
- access to roading public spaces [including roads, footpaths, parks and buildings] by disabled people
- access to housing by disabled people
- inclusion of all residents and visitors, including those with disabilities
- building of resilience in a community's preparedness for emergencies.

1. What is your name and your organisation's name?

Name and role of respondent: Andy Mannering, Community and Social Development Manager

Name of CEO, and local authority (City, District or Regional Council name) (Required):

Richard Briggs, Hamilton City Council

2. Which of the following have been included and listened to in completing this survey? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- ✓ Council officials
- ✓ Mayor and other elected representatives
- ✓ Local disability communities

Leadership

Descriptor – We are interested in your organisation's leadership on accessibility issues, as well as how it is contributing to the expectations of others. For example, local authorities can encourage its local businesses to see the benefits of going 'further' than the minimum expectations set by legislation for activities such as building development, community events and equitable employment. A local authority can also provide a model for others through its own practices, such as the through the requirements it sets within its own procurements (e.g. stipulating suppliers must have relevant disability policies).

More information

Outcome 8 of the NZDS, 'leadership', highlights the importance of everyone having access to representation, consultation and leadership opportunities on an equal basis with others.

Leadership can be a key element in progressing change, although local authorities must stay within budget as they balance priorities. Aspects of leadership can include managing and promoting accessibility initiatives, modelling principles of accessibility, providing leadership opportunities for disabled people, ensuring supports are available where needed, and having a diversity of leadership that represents the community.

Opportunities for leadership and influence that can shape the direction of and approaches used by a community. They can sit with governance, commercial, disability, volunteer or community sectors.

3. How strongly is your local authority advocating for accessibility? (Required)

Please select only one item

- 1 Poor
- 2 Developing
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Good
- 5 Strong
- 6 Outstanding

4. Who are the leaders driving accessibility improvements in your community? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- Chief Executive and other officials
- Mayor and other elected representatives
- Local disability communities
- Particular individuals
- Other (see comment)

Please add comments / links

Hamilton has a strongly committed community around increasing equity of opportunity and access by removing barriers where possible. This is evident by attitudes and a willingness to listen, learn and respond by all levels of Council. The organisations and sectors working across the city are engaged in regular collaborative work, continually raising awareness of where improvements could occur.

5. How is your local authority showing leadership and influence in promoting a culture which prioritises accessibility? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- Accessibility is considered in all areas of governance.
- Disabled people are engaged to provide necessary advice.
- Disabled people are employed in areas of leadership.
- Disabled people are 'at the table' when significant decisions are made.
- Other (see comment)

Please add comments / links

Hamilton City Council (HCC) employs a Disability Advisor to provide robust advice on disability issues that is in-line with international best practice. This is a key position that is a conduit between the Disability sector and the Council. HCC has a Disability Policy that provides guidelines that enable the Council to comply with its regulatory function in relation to maintaining quality standards, safety and access. The purpose is to provide all people with equity of opportunity and access by removing barriers where possible. It applies to: a. all Council owned and/or managed facilities, b. public places - including parks, reserves and walkways, c. the roading network, including footpaths, d. Council services, processes and projects, and e. Council run events. As part of the ongoing implementation of the Disability Policy, an annual Action Plan is created to continually prioritise and improve HCC's response around accessibility.

[HCC Disability Policy](#) and [2019-20 Action Plan](#)

Participation

Descriptor - Being able to participate and contribute is essential for wellbeing.

More information

Outcome 5 of the NZDS, 'accessibility', highlights disabled people's right to access all places, services and information with ease and dignity. Reducing disabling barriers to participation and access in society is important. All persons in society should have access on an equal basis with others, including to civic engagement and participation at all levels of civil society. Disabled people can also contribute to their communities as employees and employers.

6. How would you rate the accessibility of your local authority's processes for participation?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- 1 Poor
- 2 Developing
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Good
- 5 Strong
- 6 Outstanding

7. Which of the following apply to how your local authority includes the voices of disabled people in election processes, policy development and implementation? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- Our local authority has an accessibility advisory group which meets regularly. The members represent specific sector groups.
- Our local authority has an accessibility advisory group which meets regularly. The members are selected through an open application process.
- Our local authority has an older persons' advisory group which meets regularly. The members represent specific sector groups.
- Our local authority has an older persons' advisory group which meets regularly. The members are selected through an open application process.
- Our local authority has no accessibility or older persons' advisory group.

Please add comments / links

Hamilton City is a recognised World Health Organisation Age Friendly City, where HCC is a partner within the local steering group and is active in the associated action plan. As part of the ongoing monitoring of the Disability Policy, a bi-monthly meeting of Council staff and the community occurs to provide staff with feedback on projects and update staff on what is happening in the disability community. Its Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually. Membership of this is through an expression of interest process by those living with an impairment and is active in the wider community. A separate 6-weekly transport advocacy group made up of advocates for cycling, walking and the disability sector meet to work through key transport developments and concerns. All information around submissions, voting, and consultations are made accessible with staff being available to provide easy alternative modes where requested.

[Age Friendly Plan](#)

8. What other civic participation supports does your local authority use for disabled people?

HCC is committed to making participation as easy as possible for our community. There is a willingness to go out and have meaningful conversations with different parts of our city. During the 10-Year Plan process, meetings were scheduled and hosted by different disability advocacy groups, where early conversations with Elected Members were facilitated, which allowed these voices to be included in the decisions made. During the local authority elections, staff are active in taking mobile voting boxes to where disabled people gather, making the process as accessible as possible. In the months leading up to the elections, workshops were held

in the community explaining the process and providing support to registering and gaining required education and information. HCC is open to adapting processes where possible to ensure needs are met. An example of this was utilising NZ Sign Language in the key messaging of how to be involved.

Data collection and planning

Data can help a local authority know how many disabled people are living, employed, participating, voting, contributing or visiting in their area. Local data can also be compared with that from similar local authorities in New Zealand or other jurisdictions.

Collecting data at a system level is important for assessing progress towards fulfilling responsibilities under the New Zealand Disability Strategy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The State Services Commission has worked with the Ministry for Social Development, Statistics New Zealand and other relevant agencies to investigate developing practical guidance for employers around disability information.

9. How well does your local authority use data on accessibility? (Required)

Please select only one item

- 1 Poor
- 2 Developing
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Good
- 5 Strong
- 6 Outstanding

10. Which of the following does your local authority use to help inform its thinking on accessibility issues? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- The New Zealand Disability Strategy
- The Accessibility Charter
- Other (See comment)

Comments / Links

HCC's Disability Policy also considers and aligns with the following documents: National Disability Action Plan, He Korowai Oranga, the Maaori Health Strategy, 10-Year Plan 2018-2028, Hamilton Age Friendly Plan - 2018-2021, and the Traffic Bylaw 2015 (and subsequent amendments).

11. What information does your local authority collect on accessibility? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- Local satisfaction surveys
- Incidence of disability
- Equity of employment, training and promotion opportunities
- Reported incidences of non-accessibility, and resolution outcomes?
- Other (See comment)

Comments / Links

HCC uses data provided through Statistics New Zealand and conducts a comprehensive community profile survey in-line with the national census. This information is used to help focus and prioritise work across the community. HCC also receives regular queries around access to Council facilities and events which are investigated and responded to.

12. What are your local authority's priorities and timeframes for progress on accessibility?

Comments / Links (Required)

HCC's annual Action Plan identifies priorities and timeframes for progressing our commitment to improved equity of access. This is developed in partnership with Council business units and the wider disability community.

13. What other organisations does your local authority use to benchmark your progress on accessibility?

Comments / Links

HCC is committed to partnerships in the way that we work with the community. All organisations operating in the disability sector within the city are actively involved and engaged with Council staff. Informal narrative and awareness of the maturing of understanding around needs is a significant marker on the progress being made by HCC in the city. HCC utilises 'Be.Accessible' as an independent organisation to conduct comprehensive audits on at least two of its facilities each year as an external benchmark on these public spaces. Regular training sessions are also facilitated for Council staff, which are developed and designed with community organisations and disabled people who deliver the sessions.

14. What policies and other resources does your local authority use to support accessibility?

(Required)

Please select all that apply

- Annual planning and reporting
- In-house expertise and experience
- Informal networks, such as for disability or older people
- Overarching policy on accessibility (e.g. an Accessibility Action Plan)
- Policy on inclusive employment and accessible workplaces
- Policy on accessible information
- Policy on accessible civic participation
- Policy on accessible events
- Policy on accessible transport
- Policy on accessible built and public spaces
- Policy on access to social housing for disabled people
- Other (See comment)

Comments / Links

Although HCC does not have specific policies on accessible information, transport, built environment, public places, events, etc, all things listed are elements in the overarching policy and have identified ongoing actions in the Action Plan. Ongoing work is progressed due to the big commitment by staff to accessibility.

15. What barriers has your local authority identified as constraining your progress? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- Not yet a priority activity for elected officials
- Not yet a priority for managers and other employees
- Lack of national guidance / regulation
- The cost of retrofitting existing infrastructure
- Budget
- Other (See comment)

Comments / Links

HCC is committed to a step change, bit by bit. Where aspects are raised, either through an external audit or a community suggestion, they are assessed and implemented if feasible.

16. What would assist with progressing this work?

Comments / Links

HCC is active in making changes that are needed as renewal opportunities arise. An example of this is the improvements made around bus shelters (that includes raising curbs to allow easy access onto buses and shelters) that meet the needs of a range of people.

Please attach a copy of any documents you wish to include to this printout.

Access to information and services

Descriptor - Residents and visitors with disabilities are enabled by having access to information. This can include the provision of accessible online content, NZSL videos, Easy Read, large print, Braille, captioning.

More information

Outcome 5 of the NZDS, 'accessibility' highlights disabled people's right to access all places, services and information with ease and dignity. It is important that information and communications are easy to access in formats and languages that people can understand to help eliminate barriers to participation. One aspect is website accessibility as monitored annually by the [Association of Local Government Information Managers](#).

17. How accessible do you consider the disabled people living in your area find your local authority's information and services? (Required)

Please select only one item

- 1 Poor
- 2 Developing
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Good
- 5 Strong
- 6 Outstanding

18. How do you ensure disabled people can access the information and services that are important to them? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- Information prioritised in consultation with the disability community, is provided in accessible formats.
- Frontline staff have appropriate training.
- We include staff with lived experience of disability.
- Our website is assessed annual against the international accessibility standards.
- The access arrangements for events are included in all advertising.
- Contractors and suppliers are informed of accessibility expectations on engagement.
- None of the above

Comments / Links

Although HCC promotes the access arrangements for all major events hosted at our international stadia and events centre, these are not always promoted at more local and community run events. Different parts of the Council are more advanced in working with contractors and suppliers, ensuring they are informed of accessibility expectations. HCC has a Facebook page dedicated to talking with our growing disability community and work to ensure all documents are accessible at the outset. We are also committed to making alternative arrangements for any documents on request. Sign Language interpreters are arranged when meetings include the deaf community.

Please attach a copy of any documents you wish to include to this printout.

Transport

Accessible transport enables residents and visitors to easily navigate and move throughout the community, to engage, participate and go about their daily lives, and to feel safe doing so. This enables those that can do so independently, as well as those who may need support, to access work, entertainment, accommodation, social interaction and economic activity, etc.

An example of a new element of tension in some local authorities is footpath crowding, and e-scooters and other micro transport devices creating safety risks.

19. How accessible is your local authority's transport network? (Required)

Please select only one item

- 1 Poor
- 2 Developing
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Good
- 5 Strong
- 6 Outstanding

20. How is your local authority supporting the provision of accessible transport options, including parking?

Comments / Links (Required)

A 6-weekly advocacy meeting occurs to address community concerns and influence decisions. When HCC was approached by NZ Post to introduce Paxters into the city, this group was utilised to test and explore possibilities and helped to shape requirements for their use. The city is currently trialing micro-transport options, where this group is heavily engaged in the ongoing conversation. Minor improvements are constantly being made to widen footpaths where required. Bus shelter improvements are ongoing, including the installation of accessible kerbs. The shared path and off-road cycling network is continually expanding. This has often included tactiles to help those with low vision. The community has been surveyed around perceptions of road safety, which helps inform improvements to raised and signaled crossing points. Mobility Parks are located around the city to assist people to actively participate as they desire. Some mobility carparks have been lengthened to accommodate the increase of vehicles with ramps, which has allowed loading and unloading of passengers more safely.

21. How well is your local authority coordinating delivery of public transport (Regional Councils only)?

Comments / Links

Not applicable.

Built and public spaces

Accessible built and natural environments enable disabled residents and visitors, including children, to feel welcome, and to participate in work, entertainment, democratic participation, social interaction, exercise, and economic activity, etc.

22. How accessible are the built spaces in your local authority area? (Required)

Please select only one item

- 1 Poor
- 2 Developing
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Good
- 5 Strong
- 6 Outstanding

Comments / Links

We are aware that there are a number of relatively new 2-storey commercial buildings built in Hamilton that are under 400 square metres and were not required to have a lift installed. Under the NZ Standard 4121:2001 – ‘Design for Access and Mobility, Buildings and Associated Facilities’, installation of a lift is not required. We have previously raised concerns around this issue with the Minister of Building and Construction and the Minister for Disability Issues and will continue to ‘push’ for positive changes to be made in this area.

23. How accessible are the public spaces, including for disabled children, in your local authority area? (Required)

Please select only one item

- 1 Poor
- 2 Developing
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Good
- 5 Strong
- 6 Outstanding

Comments / Links

HCC is committed to including accessible play options and appropriate access from carparks to the play equipment across the city. Topography and slopes are looked at and addressed where possible.

24. Which of the following is/are your local authority working on to increase accessibility? (Required)

Please select all that apply

- Social housing
- Events
- Sport and recreation programmes
- Footpaths
- Building entranceways
- Accessible signage (e.g. of public buildings, spaces and maps)
- Local natural environments and parks
- Public toilets
- Buildings and other built features
- Other

Comments / Links

HCC installed New Zealand’s first Changing Places toilet facilities at the Hamilton Gardens. In addition, our cemetery has recently upgraded its facilities to include appropriate facilities for our disabled community. HCC is continually talking with the development community around universal design principles.

25. How else are disabled people enabled to participate in activities in your local authority area?

Comments / Links

HCC is committed to building an inclusive society and encourages people to participate as much as they want across the city. HCC has hosted community forums to educate disabled people about Council's work and that of its partners. Significant changes to levels of service are talked through with the community. An example of this is our city’s new kerbside rubbish collections.

Resilience and inclusive communities

Outcome 6 of the NZDS, ‘attitudes’, emphasises the importance of treating people with dignity and respect, and of disability being understood and accepted as part of the diversity of human experience. Feeling safe is also an important aspect of Outcome 4 of the NZDS, ‘rights protection and justice’.

In communities with a sense of connection and inclusiveness, disabled people feel safe, there are high levels of trust and understanding, and there is a shared sense of pride in being part of a culturally rich and vibrant community.

Local government, iwi and other community leaders can work with residents and visitors to create, advocate for and continue to foster a welcoming and inclusive community.

26. How resilient do you consider your community is? (Required)

Please select only one item

- 1 Poor
- 2 Developing
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Good
- 5 Strong
- 6 Outstanding

27. How is your local authority supporting the development of inclusive communities?

Comments / Links

HCC employs a team of Community Development Advisors that work in partnership with our diverse community to build a stronger and more inclusive community. The team works hard to ensure the social infrastructure of our city is growing and ensures that a greater understanding is built across communities. Ensuring that our spaces, places and services are inclusive and accessible to all is an organisational priority of Council.

28. How does your local authority's emergency management planning reflect inclusion?

Comments / Links

The city's local welfare committee includes representation from the disabled community and planning is intentional in providing for our most vulnerable residents in the advent of an emergency. An agreed plan exists to grow the resilience of all residents.

29. How is your local authority providing 'safe' community places or approaches for reporting incidents such as hate crime, harassment, teasing or bullying?

Comments / Links

City Safe Operations has an 0800 number and text option for anyone to report nuisance and anti-social behaviour in a public place. During daylight hours, a Safety Officer will respond to the call and deal with the incident. HCC provides community grants to organisations working to grow social and cultural wellbeing outcomes, which include a city that is connected, healthy, safe and happy.