



Whangarei District Council

Accessibility Policy 2014

Policy #0082

Policy title			
Audience (Primary)	External	Business Owner (Dept)	Community Services
Policy Author	Community Services Manager	Review date	November 2019

Table of contents

1	Policy Objective and Scope	3
2	Definition	3
3	Strategic Alignment	4
4	Principles of policy	4
5	Policy guidelines	4
6	Monitoring and Implementation	5
7	References	5

Policy title			
Audience (Primary)	External	Business Owner (Dept)	Community Services
Policy Author	Community Services Manager	Review date	November 2019

1 Policy Objective and Scope

Whangarei District Council is committed to equity and access for people with impairment so that they can participate in and contribute more fully to community and civic life. This commitment to an accessible community is reflected in the priorities of the Whangarei District Growth Strategy - Sustainable Futures 30/50, in both the Strategy Development and Implementation Plan. More specifically, the Long Term Plan 2012-2-22 has adopted as Community Outcome 5. "A district with community programmes and facilities for all".

Greater inclusiveness and participation contributes to the District's economic, social and cultural sustainability and is consistent with the purpose of Local Government:

"to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses."ⁱⁱ

Surveys conducted in Whangarei by the Community Services Department in 2013ⁱⁱ indicated that the principles of accessibility and inclusiveness are highly valued by people with impairment and that Council is expected to provide leadership in this area.

The ratification by Government in 2008 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilitiesⁱⁱⁱ supports the significance of this policy as a guideline for Council to enhance the accessibility of all its amenities. Whereas domestically the development of the New Zealand Disability Strategy (2001)^{iv}, New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy (2001)^v, New Zealand Standard 4121:2001^{vi} and the passing of the Building Act 2004 have provided a clear focus to the role of Council and the development of this policy.

The policy covers:

- All Council owned and/or managed facilities
- Public places including parks and reserves
- The roading network including footpaths
- Council services, processes and projects
- Council run events

2 Definition

The definition used in this policy was developed through the work of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, (ICF), a World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative, which provides a global standard language and framework for the description of health and health-related states.^{vii}

"...Disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions, denoting the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)." World Report on Disability 2011. WHO.

Policy title			
Audience (Primary)	External	Business Owner (Dept)	Community Services
Policy Author	Community Services Manager	Review date	November 2019

3 Strategic Alignment

This policy is aligned to the New Zealand Disability and Positive Ageing Strategies, The Whangarei District Council's Positive Ageing Strategy 2005-2015 and the Terms of Reference for the Whangarei District Council's Positive Ageing and Disability Advisory Groups. This policy assists in the delivery of Council's Vision and Mission as follows:

Vision:

To be a vibrant attractive and thriving District by developing sustainable lifestyles based around our unique environment; the envy of New Zealand and recognised worldwide

Mission:

Creating the ultimate living environment

4 Principles of policy

The guiding principles for this policy are as follows:

- 4.1 Council recognises the diverse needs of people with disabilities and acknowledges that people with disabilities are experts in their own experience.
- 4.2 Council recognises the need to provide all people with equity of opportunity and access. Council has a regulatory function to ensure that quality standards and safety are maintained and barriers to access are removed.
- 4.3 Council will act with integrity to maintain an ongoing partnership with people with disabilities built on mutual trust and respect.
- 4.4 Council will actively involve people with disabilities in decisions that directly affect their living in the District.

5 Policy guidelines

In its efforts to provide all people with equity of opportunity and access, Whangarei District Council will ensure the following:

5.1 Consultation

- 5.1.1 Council is committed to engaging with representatives of the disability sector through its regular forum, the Disability Advisory Group, and with other relevant stakeholders to seek early input into council projects and seek recommendations on courses of action that involve disabled persons.
- 5.1.2 Council will ensure disabled persons are included and encouraged to be involved in decision-making and problem solving and build strong partnerships between disabled persons and the Council.

5.2 Education, Understanding and Communication

- 5.2.1 Council is committed to ensuring that elected members, staff and contracted staff have awareness and understanding of the issues that affect the disability sector.

Policy title			
Audience (Primary)	External	Business Owner (Dept)	Community Services
Policy Author	Community Services Manager	Review date	November 2019

5.2.2 Council will ensure that its communication with the disability sector allows and encourages full access to Council information, events, services and facilities, and that information is appropriate and provided in accessible formats.

5.3 Facilities, Services and Access

5.3.1 Council infrastructure will be accessible and meet best practice standards where geographically and financially practicable.

5.3.2 Council, in its service delivery, will endeavour to remove barriers to access for people with disabilities.

5.3.3 Council will provide parking for people with disabilities through its Parking Management Strategy and Parking and Traffic By-Law.

6 Monitoring and Implementation

The Community Services Department will monitor the implementation of this policy.

6.1 As per the principle stated at 5.2.2 above in relation to effective communication and consultation, WDC will regularly undertake consultation at an operational level through the Disability and Positive Ageing Advisory Groups.

6.2 The policy will be reviewed by the Community Services Department every five years or at the request of Council, in response to changed legislative and statutory requirements or in response to any issues that may arise.

7 References

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Towards a Common Language for Functioning, Disability and Health, ICF, World Health Organization, Geneva, (2002) WHO/EIP/GPE/CAS/01.3
- p330, World Report on Disability, World Health Organisation, Geneva, (2011) ISBN 978 92 4 068521 5 (PDF)
- New Zealand Disability Strategy (2001).
- New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy (2001).
- Building Act (2004).
- New Zealand Standard 4121:2001.
- WDC, Whangarei District Growth Strategy - Sustainable Futures 30/50, Strategy Development.
- WDC, Whangarei District Growth Strategy - Sustainable Futures 30/50, Development and Implementation Plan.
- WDC Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-2019
- "Ageing in Our Place", Whangarei District Council's Positive Ageing Strategy, 2005 -2015 (2005).
- Land Transport New Zealand, Traffic Control Devices Manual Part 13, Parking Control (2007)
- WDC, Parking Management Strategy, 22.4.9.Accessible Parking (2011)

Policy title			
Audience (Primary)	External	Business Owner (Dept)	Community Services
Policy Author	Community Services Manager	Review date	November 2019

Endnotes

ⁱ s10(10(b) Local Government Amendment (2012).

ⁱⁱ Member organisations on the WDC Disability Advisory Group were interviewed regarding their relationship with, perceptions and expectations of the WDC. An accessibility survey of the Whangarei CBD directed to those directly or indirectly affected by mobility problems was conducted both on-line and face to face in the Central Library. This was followed by a physical survey of the CBD by WDC staff accompanied by volunteers using an electric wheelchair and mobility scooter.

ⁱⁱⁱ Particularly; Article 9: Accessibility, Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community, Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport.

^{iv} The Government established the Ministerial Committee on Disability Issues in 2009 to provide visible leadership and accountability for implementing the New Zealand disability Strategy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and set a coherent direction for disability issues across government.

^v The 1999 International Year of Older Persons prompted the development of a New Zealand Strategy promoting the value of older people. Extensive consultation with local communities, the voluntary sector, and central and local government agencies resulted in the 2001 New Zealand Positive Aging Strategy.

^{vi} New Zealand Standard 4121:2001 "Design for Access and mobility – Buildings and associated facilities is being reviewed in 2014.

^{vii} ICF is WHO's framework for health and disability. " ICF offers an international, scientific tool for the paradigm shift from the purely medical model to an integrated biopsychosocial model of human functioning and disability. It is a valuable tool in research into disability, in all its dimensions - impairments at the body and body part level, person level activity limitations, and societal level restrictions of participation. ICF also provides the conceptual model and classification required for instruments to assess the social and built environment."- Towards a Common Language for Functioning, Disability and Health, ICF, World Health Organization, Geneva, (2002) WHO/EIP/GPE/CAS/01.3