

en

For urgent distribution

Guidance for Responding to the DSS Consultation

**A resource developed by EGL Regional Leadership Groups
and the EGL National Leadership Group**

Definitions

The terms **disabled person/s or disabled people**, are used inclusively to refer to disabled persons, tāngata whaikaha Māori and Pacific disabled persons.

The term **carers** refers to people who care for friends, family, whānau and aiga members with a disability, health condition or illness who need help with everyday living.

Question 1: What changes can you suggest that would ensure the assessment tool and process is fair, consistent, and transparent? You might for instance wish to suggest it is: done in a different place; in person, or not; that it be supported differently; or that you receive different information about it before or after the assessment occurs.:

To create an equitable assessment process that is fair, consistent, transparent it must also be person-directed. A person-directed approach means recognising that every Deaf, disabled person, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Pacific disabled person and their family and whānau are unique and different, with their own goals, strengths, circumstances, and challenges. Instead of making people fit into a standard system, the system must be flexible and able to adapt to fit the Deaf, disabled person and their whānau. This means listening to them, understanding their needs, and providing flexible support that enables them to live a good life in their community.

Because every person is unique, a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. There are around 170,000 different plans and outcomes, so the system must be equitable and flexible. This means ensuring that minority groups on the fringes receive the same consideration as the majority in the centre. Support should be adjusted on a sliding scale based on individual needs, ensuring fairness without favouring one group over another.

The assessment should focus on the Deaf, disabled person and their whānau's goals, strengths, needs and circumstances. It should build their capability and capacity and acknowledge their unique situation. The process must ensure that people can access the right support for their needs.

Assessments must empower Deaf, disabled people to live good lives in their communities. The process should be flexible, taking place at a time and location that suits the person and their whānau. Some may prefer an in-person meeting, while others may not. Deaf, disabled people and their whānau must also receive clear, accessible information, with alternate formats available. They should also be able to choose who they want to be present at the assessment, ensuring they feel supported and comfortable. Guidelines should be provided in advance to help them prepare for the assessment and understand what to expect.

Deaf, disabled people and their whānau should have choice and control over their support, with barriers removed. Some may want full control over their personal budgets, while others need support to manage them. The most important thing is that the individual and/or the family can choose what works best for them in terms of managing a personal budget. Some have whānau support, while others have no unpaid support. The system must be flexible enough to accommodate these diverse goals and support needs.

The assessment process must respect Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the UNCRPD, and Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles. It should be mana-enhancing, it must build trusting relationships and ensure the Deaf, disabled person and their whānau are actively involved in decision-making. Most importantly, it should inspire hope and confidence in their future.

To provide the right support and guidance, the Enabling Good Lives connector model should be used at all sites that have NASC type of services. These changes will ensure the assessment process is fair, transparent, and equitable, meeting the needs of all Deaf, disabled people and their whānau.

1 Person-Centred, Holistic, and Strengths-Based Assessments:

- Deaf and disabled people must direct decisions about their lives.
- Assessments should be strengthened based and focus on a good life, including relationships, community, and aspirations—not just medical needs.
- People know their own needs best and should be empowered to make choices.

2 Flexible, Equitable and Accessible Assessments:

- Assessments should be flexible, occurring at a time and place that works for the person.
- Information must be clear, simple, provided in advance, and available in alternative formats.
- Accessibility ensures Deaf, disabled people and their whānau can engage fully and meaningfully.

3 Respect for Family and Whānau:

- Family and carers play a key role and should be recognised and valued.
- Support should help carers build their capacity to continue in their role while also maintaining their own well-being
- Family insights should be included in assessments

4 Skilled Assessors:

- Assessors must understand person-centred approaches, the social model of disability, and EGL principles.
- They should build trust and meaningful relationships.
- Interactions must be respectful, empowering, and mana-enhancing

5 Access to Community and Non-Funded Services:

- Assessments should consider access to mainstream and non-funded services
- Support should enable full community participation and an ordinary life.

6 Easy and Respectful Process:

- Assessments should build trust and mutual understanding.
- It should allow flexibility for multiple sessions, giving time to refine needs over time.
- People should not have to prove their need for support.
- The process must uphold mana and avoid unnecessary intrusion

7 Choice and Control:

- Deaf and disabled people must lead decisions about their support, with family and whānau involved.
- The process should empower people to have real choice and control.

Question 2: What information does the assessment tool need to gather about you and your circumstances to ensure it can identify the support you need?

The assessment tool needs to gather information that reflects the person's full circumstances while respecting their privacy and dignity. It should focus on the person's goals, strengths, and real needs, without asking them to prove they need help. The assessment must look at all areas of life, including family, community, social connections, and culture. Whānau can be involved to give a full picture of the person's needs.

This information empowers people by creating a person-centred plan that gives them choice and control, ensuring they get the right support.

1. Personal Goals and Aspirations

- Gather information on the person's goals, strengths, and aspirations to align support with their future plans.
- Focus on long-term goals, allowing flexibility for changing needs.
- Include details about daily life, health, education, employment, and community involvement for a holistic, person-centred approach.

2. Easy and Respectful Process

- Move beyond yes/no questions to explore the person's needs in detail.
- Build trust to encourage open sharing of needs.
- Break the process into smaller tasks, with flexibility for multiple sessions to refine the support plan.

3. Role of Whānau and Support Networks

- Recognise whānau (family) as key to the person's well-being and support.
- Include information on family, social life, and community for a complete view of the person's needs.
- Involve whānau to ensure their role and needs are acknowledged.

4. Cultural Background and Values

- Gather information on cultural background to ensure the support plan is meaningful and appropriate.
- Understand how cultural beliefs influence the person's needs and goals.

5. Financial and Daily Living Information

- Consider financial and daily living needs to ensure the support plan is realistic.
- Address areas like health, housing, education, and employment for a holistic plan.

6. Flexibility and Adaptability of Needs

- Recognise that needs change and gather information on how support should adapt over time.
- Ensure the support plan remains flexible to evolving needs.

7. Accessibility Needs

- Identify accessibility needs to make the assessment process fully accessible.
- Remove barriers to help the person engage fully in the process.

8. Barriers and Challenges

- Explore challenges, including those related to disability.
 - Identify ways to address these challenges in the support plan for full community participation.
-

Question 3: Do you support the needs of carers being specifically assessed alongside those of the disabled person? Why/Why not?

Carers are people who care for friends, family, whānau and aiga members with a disability, health condition or illness who need help with everyday living. Carers are essential/vital/ crucial in helping disabled people live the lives they choose. The well-being of carers directly affects the quality of support they provide. Supporting carers is important not only for their own well-being but also for providing a complete support system for disabled people. We believe the support system should recognise carers as a key part of the support network and address their needs while respecting the dignity and autonomy of Deaf and disabled people.

1. The Role of Carers Must Be Valued and Supported

- Carers should have access to training, guidance, and flexible support to meet their needs.
- Carers and disabled people have distinct needs, but both must have choice and control to live good lives.
- Carers' well-being includes emotional and social support, not just physical care.
- Carers' roles change over time; support systems must adapt to these changes.

2. Supporting the Whole System for Enabling Good Lives (EGL)

- Carers should control the support they receive, in line with EGL principles.
- Carers need self-directed support that respects their role, without reducing them to a checklist.
- Flexible support is needed as carers' needs can change over time.

- Caring should not be isolated—community and family networks are part of the support system.

3. Long-Term Wellbeing and Sustainability for Carers

- Family wellbeing (respite) should be a right, not a privilege, with no need to justify the need for rest.
- Carers should have access to varied support, not one-size-fits-all solutions.
- The caregiving system must be sustainable for the long term.
- The government must ensure carers have the support they need throughout their caregiving journey

Question 4: What considerations in respect to a carer's situation should be taken into account in order to link them to, or provide, the support needed?

Carers play a vital role in helping disabled people live full, self-determined lives. It's important that carers' needs and well-being are recognised as part of a strong, sustainable support system. Support for carers must be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances, aligning with Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles and respecting the disabled person's autonomy. The aim is to create a future where carers can provide effective care without sacrificing their own well-being, through flexible, dignity-based support that empowers both carers and disabled people.

1. Recognising Diverse Realities of Carers

- Carers' support must be tailored to their unique situations.
- Many carers take on multiple roles, such as advocates, educators, and community connectors. These responsibilities should be acknowledged and resourced.
- Carers have different needs depending on their circumstances, such as a parent caring for a child versus a young carer for a parent.

2. Protecting Carer Wellbeing

- Physical and mental health must be prioritised, with access to respite, mental health services, and financial support.
- Respite should be meaningful and restore carers.
- Isolation is a common issue, and systems should encourage community and peer support.
- Ageing carers need future-proofed support for when they can no longer provide care.
- Carer wellbeing should be considered across physical, mental, spiritual, and family health (Te Whare Tapa Whā).

3 Carers Need Choice, Control, and Flexibility

- Carers should have self-directed support and access to flexible funding without justification.
- Carers and disabled people should not be divided in support allocation.
- Paid carers should receive a dignified wage for their vital role.
- Carers must be protected from systemic discrimination and human rights violations.

4. Future-Proofing Carer Support

- Support systems should plan for transitions and changing needs over time.

- Flexibility is key, as caregiving roles may shift within whānau.
 - Investment in carer leadership and training is essential for carers who take on advocacy and community roles
-

Question 5: How often have your needs and services / supports been reviewed or reassessed?

Currently, reviews or reassessments vary between one to five years.

Reviews and reassessments should be personalised, based on the person's needs and life changes. There should be flexibility for more frequent reviews when significant changes occur, ensuring support remains relevant and responsive to evolving needs. This helps avoid stress, uncertainty, and respects the person's autonomy.

Reviews Should Be Led by Deaf and Disabled Persons, Not Imposed, and Should Focus on Enabling

- Deaf and disabled people should choose when and how often their reviews happen, based on their goals and needs.
 - Regular reviews help make sure support stays right for changing needs.
 - People's needs can change over time. The system should be flexible to match these changes without extra barriers.
 - Reviews should happen based on the person's life, not set timelines, to make sure they are meaningful.
 - Reviews should help Deaf and disabled people live the lives they want by making sure support matches their goals.
 - Reassessments should help change support if needed, not cause fear or stress.
 - Trust is important. Reviews should be about improving lives, not cutting support.
-

Question 6: What changes to your circumstances do you think should mean a review or reassessment of your services / supports would be needed?

Changes in circumstances such as health, living situation, employment, developmental milestones, or significant life events should trigger a reassessment to ensure that supports are still appropriate. Reassessments should respond to these changes, ensuring individuals get the support they need to live a good, fulfilling life. Regular reassessments help meet changing needs and ensure people continue to have the right support.

1. Reassessments Should Be Person-Led, Not Imposed

- People should ask for a reassessment when their needs change, without fear of losing support.
- Reassessments should focus on helping people move forward, not proving if they "deserve" support. Reviews should be simple and focus on supporting people's aspirations, helping them reach their goals and live a good life.

2. Situations That Should Prompt a Review

- Major life transitions like moving from school to adulthood, starting a job, or changing where you live.
- Changes in health or disability needs, like needing more medical care, recovering from a health crisis or increased health needs.
- Changes in support networks, like change in family dynamics, losing a caregiver or needing different support.
- Personal milestones like getting a new job, moving home, or taking on new roles in the community.
- When someone wants to try new things, the support should help, not stop them.
- Support should adjust before a crisis happens, not just after.
- If someone is struggling or at risk, a review should happen right away.

Question 7: How often do you think your services / supports need to be reviewed or reassessed? (For instance, every year, every two years, every three years, or every five years.)

The frequency of reviews should be flexible, self-directed and based on the person's changing needs, not on fixed timelines. Professionals should work closely with Deaf and disabled people, keeping open communication to identify when adjustments are needed. People should have the flexibility to request reassessments whenever their situation changes. This ensures that support stays aligned with their evolving goals and needs, providing the right level of support at the right time. Reviews should happen when needed, not according to predetermined schedules.

Reviews Should Happen When People Need Them, Not When Systems Demand Them

- **Self-Directed Reassessments:** People should have the ability to request a review whenever their needs change, giving them control over the process.
- **No "Check-In" Reassessments:** If someone's support needs are stable, there should be no need for unnecessary routine reviews just to meet system rules.
- **Avoid Unnecessary Bureaucracy:** If the current support continues to meet the person's needs, there shouldn't be extra reviews, simplifying the process.

Question 8: What information or support might NASCs provide that will help you access the services, beyond DSS, that you might be eligible for?

Needs Assessment and Service Coordination Agencies (NASC) type of services should be powerful allies for Deaf, disabled people and their families. They should go beyond assessments and help people access the support they need. NASC-type of services should focus on empowering individuals, not just coordinating DSS-funded services, by providing access to a range of community-based and self-determined support options. We should be looking at the Kaituhono/ Connector Role.

A NASC-type of service should act as a one-stop shop, offering clear, accessible information about all services, including mainstream and community resources, and guiding people through these options. They must also advocate for Deaf and disabled people to ensure they get the support they are entitled to, identifying additional resources when needed.

Staff should be well-trained, respectful, and focused on empowering people with real choice and control over their lives.

1 NASCs type of service Must Move Beyond a DSS-Centric Mindset

- Human-centred approach - NASC type of service should use connectors who are trusted advisors, not just budget administrators.
- Government Liaison role - Have a dedicated officer to connect people with services beyond DSS, such as ACC, health, education, and community resources.
- Breaking down silos - Agencies like Work and Income, ACC, and Oranga Tamariki should collaborate for seamless support.
- End the "default to service provider" model - NASC type of service should inform people about self-directed support options, not just direct them to contracted providers.
- Holistic support navigation - Guide people on services like housing, education, employment, transport, and community participation.

2. NASC Type of Service s Must Operate with Transparency and Respect

- Involve people in decisions - Engage Deaf, disabled people and families in all discussions about their support.
- Training in the human rights model - Staff must be trained in EGL principles and the UNCRPD for a strengths-based approach.
- Valuing, people's expertise - Recognise Deaf and disabled people as experts in their own lives, building support with them, not for them.

3. NASCs Type of Service Must Support People Before They Need Crisis Intervention

- Proactive support - Act before a crisis happens, ensuring early help and smooth coordination.
- Support without fear - Build trust by enabling, not gatekeeping.
- Support as a right, not a privilege - Ensure everyone receives the full support they are entitled to, without treating it as welfare.

Question 9: Do you prefer Option 1 (link flexible funding to the person's plan, with oversight of how it is used) or Option 2 (adjust current lists of what can and can't be funded using flexible funding)? Why?

Neither of these options supports true autonomy, flexibility, or a rights-based approach to disability support. Both focus on control and oversight, limiting self-determination. They also fail to fully support carers' wellbeing and respite.

We prefer to align with Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles. Funding should be tied to a personalised plan that meets individual needs and goals, offering flexibility in how the funds are used. Deaf, disabled people and their families should have full control over their support budgets, with no need to repeatedly prove their needs. This approach empowers individuals to decide how to achieve their goals and adapt as their needs evolve.

1 The Problem with Oversight and Restricted Lists

- Oversight suggests that Deaf and disabled people cannot be trusted to know their own needs.
- Rigid lists limit flexibility, ignoring that needs change over time.
- Oversight creates unnecessary barriers, restricting people's ability to live a good life.
- Government systems should not control people's choices or create unnecessary hurdles.
- Deaf and disabled people should have the same trust in spending their budgets as pensioners do.

2 True Flexible Funding

- Funding that gives real choice and control.
- Shift from "what is allowed" to "how can we enable" self-directed lives.
- Trust Deaf and disabled people and their families to make decisions.
- Minimal approval processes for support purchases.
- A simple, transparent system focused on outcomes and trust.

Question 10: Do you have any suggestions on how flexible funding can be used to allow disabled people and carers as much choice, control and flexibility as possible, while still providing transparency and assurance the funding is being used effectively, and is supporting outcomes?

Flexible funding is about trust, autonomy, and helping Deaf and disabled people live full lives. Restrictive oversight turns "flexibility" into control and bureaucracy. The focus should be on enabling meaningful life outcomes, not policing fund usage. Capacity building, through education, peer mentorship, and the right tools, is a more effective safeguard than compliance. When Deaf, disabled people and families are informed and confident, they make better decisions. Genuine empowerment leads to success, not force

1 To make flexible funding work effectively, the following points must be considered:

- Supporting choice and control - Give Deaf and disabled people the autonomy to manage their funds.
- Transparency - Provide clear guidelines on how funds can support life goals.
- Capacity building - Offer tools, knowledge, and mentorship to manage budgets effectively.
- Empowering self-determination - Support people in making decisions that best suit their needs, without unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Direct access to funding - Deaf and disabled people should access funding directly, without being forced into provider-based models.

2 Flexible Funding Must Be Truly Flexible

- No restrictive lists or bureaucratic approvals - Funds should be used in ways that suit individual lives.
- Trust Deaf and disabled people to make decisions about their support.
- Enable personalisation - People should choose who they hire, what they buy, and adjust support as needed.
- Adapt funding to changing needs, without endless reviews and approvals.

3 Trust and Transparency Can Coexist Without Overreach

- Build a principles-based system, focused on trust, not rigid rules.
 - Regular person-directed check-ins, not policing receipts.
 - Allow natural accountability - like other public entitlements.
 - Focus on outcomes, not paperwork. Success is about living well, not submitting perfect reports.
 - Invest in capacity building to empower people, rather than policing them.
-

Question 11: Do you support the introduction of criteria for receiving flexible funding? Please let us know why, or why not?

No, we strongly oppose the introduction of strict rules for receiving flexible funding. A principles-based approach, rather than a rules-based system, is what truly enables flexibility and innovation. Flexibility should be the core of the funding system, allowing Deaf and disabled people and their families to make choices based on their unique needs. Restrictive rules would go against the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles, which focus on self-determination, choice, and control. The system should allow people to create personalised support solutions that help them live a good life, without unnecessary limitations. Flexible funding is meant to cover disability-related needs, including programmes, items, and support staff, without unnecessary restrictions. We need a funding system that empowers, not controls.

EGL has already made a positive impact—we cannot accept policies that undo this progress.

1 Flexible Funding Must Be Based on Rights, Not Bureaucratic Criteria

- Deaf and disabled people should not have to "qualify" for flexibility—it should be the foundation of all funding.
- Disability support is a right, not a privilege.

- Deaf and disabled people should not have to prove their worthiness to access support for full lives.
- Introducing eligibility criteria brings back the gatekeeping mentality EGL seeks to eliminate.
- We reject ableist policies that assume Deaf and disabled people cannot manage their own support.
- Funding should follow the person and enable personalised solutions, not be tied to arbitrary conditions.
- Success should be based on life outcomes, not fitting bureaucratic definitions.

2 System Built on Trust and Outcomes, Not Control

- EGL shows that when people are trusted, they usually make responsible decisions.
 - Restrictive criteria create barriers, especially for those already navigating complex systems.
 - A principles-based approach enables true flexibility and innovation.
 - Transparency should come from building capacity and support, not compliance-driven criteria.
 - Tying funding to rigid criteria forces people into restrictive pathways that don't reflect real life.
 - Support must fit our lives, not force us into pre-determined boxes.
 - Shift away from gatekeeping to self-determined support.
-

Question 12: Which of the following criteria for receiving flexible funding do you agree or disagree should be included and why? (Choose all that you think should apply.)

12a. Use of flexible funding is part of an agreed plan and linked to a specific need.

Agree/Disagree

We agree flexible funding should be linked to a plan, but it must remain adaptable to the person's changing needs and goals. The plan should reflect the individual's aspirations, not just predefined needs.

Flexible funding should empower people through self-determination and trust. It should focus on life purposes, not rigid requirements, promoting autonomy and reducing barriers. The plan must evolve with life changes, allowing genuine flexibility and ensuring decisions suit the person's life without unnecessary interference.

12b. Disabled People and/or Their Family/Whānau/Carers Are Able to Manage the Responsibilities of Flexible Funding

Agree

We agree Deaf, disabled people and their families should manage flexible funding, but support must align with their individual needs. Effective management comes through capacity-building, not restrictive rules. Training, peer mentoring, and community support help people manage funding successfully while offering assistance when needed. Flexibility means allowing people to choose how they manage their funding—whether self-managing or with support. A one-size-fits-all approach must be avoided, recognising that everyone may have different preferences for managing their funding.

12c. Flexible funding will be used to purchase a service or support that DSS provides through its contracted services/supports, that will address a person's disability-related support, and there is an advantage to using flexible funding to purchase it (such as greater flexibility for scheduling, it is closer to where the person lives etc).

Agree/Disagree, Why/Why not?

Disagree

Flexible funding should be truly flexible and not limited to DSS-contracted providers. It should allow Deaf and disabled people and their families to choose from a wide range of support options, whether that's a DSS provider, private provider, direct-employed support worker, or community networks. Restricting funding to only government-selected providers undermine the principles of flexibility and self-determination upheld by Enabling Good Lives (EGL). The focus should be on achieving life outcomes, not controlling the specific services used. Mainstream-first approaches should always be prioritised, supporting people to live ordinary lives with community resources rather than defaulting to DSS services. Trusting Deaf and disabled people to make the best choice for their needs is essential to EGL and must not be undermined by limited options.

12d. Flexible funding will address a service gap, where the service is not otherwise available, or suitable for the individual.

Agree/Disagree, Why/Why not?

Agree

Flexible funding should be used to fill service gaps where necessary services are unavailable or unsuitable. Its goal is not just to cover gaps in DSS services but to enable Deaf and disabled people to access the supports that best meet their needs, whether mainstream, community-based, or individualised. A well-designed plan should guide funding to align with the person's needs and goals, reflecting the principle of mainstream-first. EGL is built on the belief that Deaf and disabled people should have equal access to all spaces and services. Flexible funding ensures they can participate in ordinary life, using resources that suit them, whether from DSS or wider community options.

12e. The cost of the support or service that will be funded is not more expensive than other ways to get that support.

Agree/Disagree, Why/Why not?

We disagree that funding should always go to the cheapest option. While cost-effectiveness is important, the focus should be on enabling Deaf and disabled people to live fulfilling lives. People should have the flexibility to choose the support that works best for them, even if it costs more. Sometimes, this means investing in higher-quality, more tailored services. Ultimately, funding should empower Deaf and disabled people to make decisions that enhance their well-being, even if it sometimes means higher costs for more suitable or personalized support. The key is balancing financial sustainability with giving Deaf and disabled people the autonomy to choose the support that best meets their needs and goals. Funding should enhance quality of life, not limit people to lower-cost options that may not fit their needs

12f. The flexible funding will enable the person to purchase or access a service that is expected to reduce a person's future support needs.

Agree/Disagree, Why/Why not?

We disagree that flexible funding should be used to reduce future support costs. Expecting Deaf and disabled people to become "less costly" devalues their lives, especially for those with significant impairments. Many disabilities don't improve, and this expectation fails to recognise that. Instead of focusing on reducing costs, funding should ensure that people have the right supports to live meaningful lives.

The purpose of flexible funding is to help individuals live fulfilling lives, not to lower their future needs. Everyone's support needs change over time, whether disabled or not, and the focus should be on providing what's needed to thrive and belong in society.

Funding should support the right to live a good life, not just financial efficiency. Supports like assistive technology or education can enhance participation without reducing needs. New Zealand's commitment to the UNCRPD (United

Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) upholds that Deaf and disabled people should not be expected to "cost less" over time. The government must fund support based on human rights, not budget cuts.

Question 13: Can you suggest other criteria for accessing flexible funding in addition to, or instead of, those above? If you have suggestions, please explain why you think they will be helpful for those who are accessing flexible funding.

This question is fundamentally flawed because it assumes that barriers are necessary for people to access flexible funding. Instead of looking for additional criteria to restrict access, we should be focused on removing obstacles and ensuring that flexible funding is truly flexible. The idea of adding more criteria contradicts the very essence of flexibility, which is to allow individuals to make choices that best suit their needs. If criteria must exist, they should be based on human rights, fairness, and self-determination, not on bureaucratic control. Here are some suggestions for a more inclusive and empowering system of flexible funding

- **Trust and Autonomy:** Everyone eligible for disability support should have automatic access to flexible funding, with trust in their ability to manage it based on their needs. Support should be available where needed, without unnecessary restrictions.
- **Removing Barriers:** Flexible funding should not require excessive proof of need or burdensome reporting. People must have the freedom to choose the support that works best for them.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Funding should follow the person, not the provider, enabling full participation in society and reflecting their values, culture, and future plans.
- **Continuous Engagement:** Continuous engagement with Deaf and disabled people and their families is essential to ensure services remain relevant and responsive to evolving needs.

These changes will create a more empowering and equitable funding system that respects the rights and choices of Deaf and disabled people.