# Developmental Evaluation Report Summary

## For residential services – sensory, learning and physical disability

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| **Name of provider:** | Nelson Marlborough District Health Board Disability Support Services |
| **Number of locations visited by region** | 1 |
| **Date visit/s completed:** | 1 -3 May 2018 |
| **Name of Developmental Evaluation Agency:** | Standards and Monitoring Services |

## General Overview

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| Nelson Marlborough District Health Board Disability Support Services (NMDHB DSS) took over the contract for Out of Home Facility Based Respite in August 2017. NMDHB DSS has not previously provided any services for the support of disabled children and youth; it is still in the process of developing the framework for the delivery of the Respite Service. A home has been provided by the DHB within the hospital grounds for the respite service to operate from. A number of property upgrades have been requested to be addressed by the DHB but few had been actioned at the time of the onsite visit. Outstanding issues include an upgrade to the gate for entry into the property, a bathroom renovation to better suit the needs of those using the service and adjustments to the doors used for entry and exit to the home. A successful adaption has been made to the kitchen and dining area, addressing safety concerns expressed by the staff working in the home. The service is also exploring the suitability of another property in Nelson to offer respite for those with physical support needs.  Several key areas have been identified for improvement and action following the evaluation. They include:  • improved communication – there is a lack of consistency in the communication noted from all stakeholders interviewed  • future planning for young adults to transition from the service  • development of protocols and procedures relating to Child and Youth Respite  • access to specific training for the staff in line with the needs of the children they support  • review the compatibility and appropriateness of children and young adults booked for respite together  • address the property requirements of the home so those using the service have a safe environment and are able to experience a home away from home stay.  We understand there are additional referrals for children under the age of 16 to access the service via the Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination Service (NASC).  DSS is yet to develop a transition plan for young adults over the age of 21 to exit the service to ensure vacancies will exist for new children approved by Support Works, the local NASC, to enter the service in a timely manner.  The families interviewed described the transition from the previous provider offering Facility Based Respite as challenging. Many stated there is an identified local need for the service and were pleased an option was made available to them. The families are keen to partner with DSS and to work together to improve the current issues in a constructive manner. We encourage DSS to forge stronger relationships with the families and schools to achieve the best outcome for all. |

## Quality of Life – evaluative comment on how well the service is contributing to high quality support for young people and their families/whānau

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| **RESPECT AND RIGHTS**  An Information Pack is being developed for the young people and their family/whānau to review when entering the service. Elements of the pack were sighted and included information about rights and responsibilities; this information is also included in the marketing brochure and the service website. As part of the introduction to the service, the Team Leader meets with the family/whānau to discuss their needs. Needs Assessments may also be used as a reference for the service to review the cultural values and beliefs of the child and his/her family/whānau.  The home is able to accommodate four children for overnight stays. The grounds are fenced and have space for activities, including jumping on the trampoline and riding small bikes in the concreted area, at the back of the home**.**  **SERVICE USERS AND ACCESS TO THE SERVICE**  Each person has a needs assessment completed with the NASC, Support Works. This outlines the number of respite days available for each person. The assessment forms the basis of the Support Plan developed with DSS. The needs assessments are reviewed each year and a full assessment made every three years, or as the person’s needs change. A booking calendar is developed between the Team Leader and the family/whānau when beginning respite. This is used as the basis for the year’s access to the facility-based respite; variations can be managed and several families/whānau appreciate the flexibility of the service when called on to change bookings. It is hoped the service will have the ability to upgrade its technology so live documents, rosters and plans can be easily accessed.  There has been little discussion on the transition for those over the age of 21 to exit the children and young person’s respite and to assess other suitable options. Reference to transition is included on the DSS website: *However we know that 21-25 is a time of huge changes and transitions. So in negotiation with you and the NASC we can continue to provide respite up to the age of 25.*  We suggest DSS considers the transition from Child and Youth Respite to include:   * consultation with family/whānau, NASC and other stakeholders * identification of options * development of a Transition Plan with suggested timeframes.   The service is reminded the plan should be flexible to meet the individual need.  **INDIVIDUAL PLANS**  Each child/young adult has a Support Plan, some also have Behaviour Support Plans. Some of the family/whānau have provided input to the plans, either verbally or in writing, but had not received copies of either plan now being used to support their children at respite. The Individual Files we reviewed contained copies of the plans but were unsigned by the family/whānau or, in some cases, the service representative. A request was made for the copies to be forwarded to family/whānau in draft form so they can provide updates prior to the plans being finalised.  School representatives are also keen to share plans with the consent of the family/whānau so a more holistic approach may be taken when supporting a child at respite. Discussion was that this may include plans, learnings, resources and training with an aim of a more cohesive approach to goal setting and support strategies. The school representatives also commented on the merit of the DSS support staff being invited to participate in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings so they become aware of the goals the teacher is working on with the child. This would only occur with the consent of the family/whānau.  **SERVICE DELIVERY: ENVIRONMENT, PRACTICES AND SAFETY**.  All of the families/whānau we met spoke of the importance of respite and their desire for it to be a worthwhile experience for their children/young adults. They acknowledge the efforts of DSS to establish a facility at short notice. The house is awaiting further renovation so that it can provide an environment that is safe and homelike. Recent changes have included fencing, windows being replaced with safety glass, the addition of a solid, transparent plastic wall and door between the kitchen and the open plan dining/living room area of the home. The staff and management of DSS stated there was a need to limit access to the kitchen, specifically because of the oven, elements and access to the fridge by some of those using respite. There is an expectation of the families/whānau to be provided with the Risk Management Plans developed for their children/young adults. This was not reported to have occurred, copies were located but were unsigned by the Manager. This was requested to be actioned.  Following an incident earlier in the year involving a child leaving the property several upgrades have been made to fencing and the home’s security. Reviews and change to procedures have been actioned. However, the gates that provide access from the driveway to the home are still operating without automatic shutting or locking mechanisms as identified in the Incident Review. The Evaluation Team was told agreement had been made for the introduction of a swipe card system for the staff to open and close a more secure gate; a date for installation has not been advised. The Evaluation Team sighted several emails requesting confirmation from the Facilities Manager of the DHB. We support this request with a requirement to ensure a safe environment is provided at the home.  The home has a lounge area with couches and a television. The living spaces, including the dining room, are furnished comfortably. The clear plastic wall separating the kitchen and dining room has colourful stickers added to it to make it more visually appealing to the children. The wall has a door built into it which the staff keep locked when the house is in use. A review of the one bathroom has been requested to ensure it meets the needs of those using the home.  The DSS staff interviewed were knowledgeable about the children and young adults they support. They spoke of the interests and support needs of those using respite. The level of staffing is dependent on the needs and number of children/young adults using the respite home at one time; a staff person is rostered for sleepover. Both mandatory and additional training is made available to the staff supporting people with high and complex support needs. The staff appreciated the training they had received but would like opportunities to have specific training so they can best support the children/young adults. Examples were provided to the management team of DSS.  **QUALITY REQUIREMENTS**.  The families/whanau interviewed are keen to partner with DSS to ensure ongoing respite being made available in Nelson. They are keen to assist in developing the service so it is providing positive and meaningful respite experiences for their children.  Improvements in communication between the office based DSS staff and the families/whānau was consistently noted as an area for improvement. |

## Outline of requirement (not including those relevant to support for specific individuals)[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| * Review eligibility of older people accessing the service and develop Transition Plans when preparing to exit Child and Youth Respite. * Action improvements in the property at Xxxxxx Street to ensure the environment is safe for those who use it. |

## Recommendations

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| 1. Explore the options used for internal locks to ensure they are reflective of a homelike environment.  2. Consult with the families regarding their preferred form of communication and procedures.  3. Forward copies of draft Support Plans to the families/whānau for comment.  4. Review communication procedures with the schools.  5. Review staff training options so they are confident in supporting the needs of the children/young adults.  6. Complete sign off by the Manager for Risk Management Plans. |

1. Please see the [evaluation tool](http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/disability-services/contracting-disability-support-services/developmental-evaluation-disability-support-services) for reference [↑](#footnote-ref-1)