

Health and Disability NGO Working Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

To build a strong, respectful, innovative and proactive relationship between the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the health and disability Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), including Maori and Pacific NGOs. This will provide a vehicle for improving the quality of health and disability services and their outcomes.

2. Background

In December 2001, Government signed a *Statement of Government Intentions for an Improved Community-Government Relationship*. This Statement envisages "strong and respectful relationships between Government and community, voluntary and iwi/Maori organisations". It articulates clear objectives for Government agencies for an improved relationship with the community sector.

The MOH and NGOs subsequently agreed a Framework to implement the Government's *Statement of Intentions*. This Terms of Reference outlines the commitment of the NGOs to put the Government's vision and the MOH/NGO Framework into practice.

3. Objectives

The NGO Working Group will have the following four objectives:

1. Build a national strategic policy relationship for NGOs to engage with Government agencies, particularly the MOH, and District Health Boards (DHBs).
2. To provide a strong and unified "voice" for NGOs that provides input on MOH strategies, eg the NZ Health Strategy, the NZ Disability Strategy, and the Primary Healthcare Strategy.
3. To establish an NGO relationship with funders and policy makers that will include:
 - access and influence to cross the MOH's areas of policy development
 - relationship building within the sector
 - identification of common issues (positives and negatives) to advocate
 - Maori health, Pacific health, primary health, public health, mental health and disability support issues

- dissemination of information within the sector
 - consultation and collaboration on policy development, needs assessment, strategic planning, annual planning, workforce and sector development, infrastructure issues and emerging issues.
4. The Working Group will not:
- intervene in individual contracts between the NGOs and MOH and/or DHBs, and
 - replace other and the existing one-to-one relationships that NGOs may have with Government departments and agencies (eg with the MOH and DHBs)
 - speak for the wider NGO Forum members without the specific mandate of the wider group to do so on a particular issue.
5. Work with the Ministry of Health in organising the NGO Forums.

4. Membership of the Working Group

NGOs eligible to participate in the Working Group include independent community, and iwi/Maori organisations operating on a not-for-profit basis, which bring a value to society that is distinct from both Government and the market.

The Working Group will comprise approximately eight to 12 NGO members. The NGO membership will cover a broad spectrum – ideally all main health and disability services, preferably two from each service. Maori and Pacific will be represented on the Working Party.

Members offering themselves for nomination will be expected to make themselves available for meetings. Members of the Working Group are expected to make a commitment to be part of the Group for a minimum of one year, to maintain continuity and avoid repetition.

5. Chair of the Working Group

The members of the Working Group will elect a Chair. The Chair will have the mandate of the Working Group and the NGO Forum, and responsibility to:

- ensure that, if in the event that membership is not continuous for a full year, members of the Working Group continue to cover a broad spectrum of the health and disability sectors
- act as spokesperson for the wider NGO Forum and the Working Group within the terms outlined in paragraph 3.4
- co-ordinate planned activities
- act as a point of contact for members of the wider NGO Forum
- organise and chair Working Group meetings

- organise agendas and minutes of Working Group meetings
- liaise with the MOH's NGO relationship manager.

6. Role of Members

Members of the Working Group are elected on the basis that they have knowledge specific to the sector they are working in that they can contribute. They will not represent the part of the health and disability sector their organisation works in, however, they will act as a conduit of information to disseminate to their own networks.

7. Regional Networks

NGO Forum members will work with existing regional networks to ensure that regional views can be represented at NGO Forums, and at Working Group meetings where possible. Where these regional networks do not exist, NGOs may encourage and promote their development.

8. Process

8.1 Method for Selecting Members of the Working Group

Members of the Working Group will be self-nominated, and elected by the members attending an NGO Forum where the election of members is on the agenda. The methodology used to elect members will be decided by the NGOs attending the Forum.

8.2 Quorum

The quorum of members of the Working Group will be a majority of the total members elected to the Working Group. If for any reason a member is not able to attend a Working Group meeting, that member may nominate a proxy to attend on their behalf.

8.3 Meeting Content – to discuss at the WG meeting

The content of meetings should ensure the objectives of the Working Group are met.

The Working Group is a decision-making entity, but may speak on behalf of the wider NGO Forum members on a specific issue only when mandated to do so. However, members may take recommendations back to their organisations, or to the wider NGO Forum members for approval where appropriate.

The Working Group will liaise with the MOH's NGO relationship manager on its Work Programme and planned meetings.

8.4 Frequency of Meetings

The wider NGO group will meet six monthly. These meetings are referred to as NGO Forums.

The Working Group will meet bi-monthly (or when required). Meetings will be face-to-face or, where appropriate, by teleconference when required to advance the work program.

8.5 Location of Meetings

The Working Group will decide the location of its meetings. In making these decisions consideration will be given to:

- where members of the Working Group are based
- the respective costs of travel and resources on members.

NGO Forums will be held in Wellington, and will be supported by a number of regional networks to disseminate information and to ensure that regional representation is maintained at the NGO Forums.

9. Review of the Working Group

The wider NGO group will review the operation, function and annual work plan of the Working Group annually at an NGO Forum, or when a motion is passed by a majority vote of NGOs attending an NGO Forum.

10. Linkages

The Working Group will be expected to raise the profile of NGOs and build linkages to such groups as the following:

- Government agencies (in addition to the Ministry of Health), for example the Ministries of Social Development, Education, Women's Affairs, Child, Youth and Family, Te Puni Kokiri, Treasury, Housing NZ, Department of Internal Affairs, the State Services Commission and the National Health Committee
- The CEOs of the Ministries of Health, Social Development and Education
- Sector reference groups/forums such as Northern Regional Public Health Sector Reference Group, Disability Provider Support Forums, DSS/National CEO forum
- District Health Boards NZ
- Other national health and disability sector groups, and other NGO umbrella groups

- Maori Co-purchasing Organisations.

11. The Co-ordinator Function

The co-ordinator function will sit with the Chair's organisation (therefore shifting organisations as the Chair is changed). Guidelines will be drafted on reasonable expenses that could be claimed, and parameters set around the time and cost that could be invoiced by the Chair's organisation for the co-ordinator function. The available funding will be used for Working Group members' travel and for costs associated with the Chair's work - to be paid to the agency with whom the Chair is associated. The Working Group will agree the exact proportion of these two expenses.

12. Role of the Ministry of Health

The MOH is not be a member of the Working Group, but will attend the Working Group meetings unless requested not to.

The MOH will organise the Forums, however, these will be led by the NGOs through the Working Group. The MOH will attend the Forum and invite other personnel from the MOH to attend when required. This role will be coordinated through an NGO relationship manager at the MOH.

The MOH will not have voting rights on motions put forward to the Working Group or NGO Forum members, including:

- the election of the Working Group members
- any review of the Working Group discussed in section 9.

However, the MOH may provide advice and suggestions on any matter for the NGOs' consideration.

The MOH may also:

- advocate to raise the awareness of NGOs within the MOH
- lead and develop the MOH-side of implementing the work program

13. Amendments

These Terms of Reference may be amended at any time when a proposal to amend them is passed by a majority vote of NGOs attending an NGO Forum.