

SUMMARY TOP-LINE RESULTS FROM NGO WORKING GROUP SURVEY NGO RELATIONSHIPS WITH MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND DHBS SEPTEMBER 2007

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the main top-line results from a survey conducted by the NGO Working Group in July 2007. It provides an overview of the responses to the quantitative questions in the survey and has been written to provide top-line results in time for the October Ministry of Health – NGO Forum. Further analysis is yet to be undertaken of the qualitative results and once completed these will be incorporated into a full and final report that will be available later in 2007.

The NGO Working Group carried out this survey of NGOs as part of their role in providing feedback to the Ministry of Health on issues affecting the NGO sector. It is a repeat of a similar survey carried out by the NGO Working Group in 2003 (about NGO-DHB relationships) and 2004 (about NGO-Ministry of Health relationships).

The survey was carried out on-line and was advertised in the weekly update from the NGO desk of the Ministry of Health, in the NGO Working Group section of the Ministry's website and via various NGO networks (such as the NZCOSS newsletter, NZFVWO newsletter, Te Pou newsletter, ANGOA database, CST email list, Platform website).

Despite this wide circulation, only a relatively small number of NGOs completed the survey¹, with a similar response to the last surveys conducted by the NGO Working Group.

NGOs who responded to the survey were representative of the sector in that they came from across the sector (representing disability, public health, personal health, mental health, Maori and Pacific NGOs), ranged in size from small to large organizations and came from all DHB areas.

Due to the small sample size the results should be interpreted with caution. They provide an indication of the state of the relationship between NGOs and the Ministry / DHBs but cannot be seen to be representative of views of the whole health and disability NGO sector.

OVERVIEW

The results of this survey demonstrate that there are significant variations in the quality of the relationships that NGOs have with the Ministry of Health and DHBs. Some of these are very positive, and some not so. The results summarised below show that there is room for improvement in NGO - Ministry and NGO - DHB relationships. The results are very similar to the last survey carried out by the NGO Working Group in 2003 and 2004.

The main issues for NGOs into the future focus on funding / sustainability and workforce concerns. In relation to NGO-Ministry relationships the issues also include:

- A desire for increased levels of personal communication
- A need for improvement in the quality of the relationship, including greater respect for and valuing of NGOs
- Contractual issues (including a desire for more prompt and useful feedback on accountability reporting)
- A desire for increased involvement in policy development and service planning.

¹ More NGOs started the survey than completed it. 57 NGOs described their organisation (with 51 providing identifying information), however 64 NGOs answered the last question about issues facing NGOs in the next 5 years.

OVERALL RELATIONSHIPS

Overall, the relationship that NGOs had with the Ministry of Health was less positive than the relationship that many of the same NGOs had with other Ministries, with no-one describing their overall relationship with the Ministry of Health as excellent and half describing it as only ‘fair’. This is a slight deterioration on the last survey results.

The relationship that NGOs had with DHBs overall was slightly better with half describing the relationship as ‘good’.

Overall, do you feel your relationship with the Ministry of Health / DHBs is:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Number of NGOs responding
Ministry of Health	0%	35%	50%	15%	59
DHBs	2%	52%	30%	16%	44
MSD – CYFS	33%	40%	27%	0%	15
MSD – WINZ	24%	58%	12%	6%	17
MSD – FACS	14%	86%	0%	0%	7
MSD – Other	25%	58%	17%	0%	12
Ministry of Education	20%	30%	40%	10%	10
ACC	33%	33%	22%	11%	9
Te Puni Kokiri	20%	40%	0%	40%	5

NGOs were more likely to disagree than agree that Ministry and DHB managers and staff demonstrate commitment to strong respectful relationships between government and community organisations. This is a slight deterioration from the previous survey where the responses were more evenly divided between agreeing and disagreeing.

Over three quarters of NGOs felt their relationship with the Ministry and DHBs was unequal, although the majority would contact the Ministry or a DHB in a time of difficulty for their organisation.

CONTRACTING RELATIONSHIP OVERALL

In general, more NGOs agreed than disagreed that the Ministry directorates / DHBs that they contract with understand their organisation and that the NGO feels clear about the funders expectations of the NGO. This is a slight improvement from the last survey.

NGOs were more evenly split between agreeing and disagreeing that a Ministry directorate / DHB invested in their capacity (with slightly more disagreeing than agreeing – a similar result to last survey).

TREASURY PRINCIPLES

NGOs were asked to describe how much they agreed or disagreed that Ministry directorates / individual DHBs that they contracted with followed the Treasury principles for contracting with non-government organisations.

NGOs were more likely to agree than disagree that Ministry directorates and DHBs recognized the objectives of both parties, worked constructively with NGOs and recognized the responsibilities of NGOs to their stakeholders and that DHBs communicated in an open and timely manner. This is a similar result to the last Ministry survey (this question was not asked in the last DHB survey).

NGOs were more likely to disagree than agree that DHBs respected the autonomy of the voluntary sector and were evenly split between agreeing and disagreeing that the Ministry respected the autonomy of the voluntary sector. This is a worse result than the last Ministry survey (where previously more NGOs agreed than disagreed that the Ministry respected the autonomy of the voluntary sector).

NGOs also were more likely to disagree than agree that the Ministry communicated in an open and timely manner – a similar result to last survey.

REPORTING

The majority of NGOs reported that the Ministry directorates / DHBs that they contracted with generally only sometimes or never responded to reports in a timely and relevant manner (with the Ministry appearing to be slightly less responsive than DHBs overall).

This is a very similar result to the last NGO Working Group surveys.

COMMUNICATION

Most NGOs described the communication from Ministry directorates / DHBs as useful or very useful and the majority felt that Ministry directorates and DHBs responded in a timely manner to specific request at least sometimes.

However, almost half of the NGOs stated that they believed that communication from the Ministry directorates / DHBs is not frequent enough.

INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

NGOs did not generally feel involved in the policy development process, with a significant proportion of NGOs (40%) stating that they are never consulted by the Ministry of Health in the development of policy. This result is worse than last survey.

Nearly three quarters of NGOs thought that the Ministry of Health usually or sometimes kept them informed of policy developments affecting their organisation.

INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE PLANNING

Similarly, many NGOs (around 40%) did not feel involved in Ministry-led service planning, although the result was slightly better for DHB-led service planning. This question was not asked last survey.

TOP THREE THINGS FOR THE NGO WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

52 NGOs responded to a question asking about the top three things for the NGO Working Group to address to assist in developing good NGO / Ministry of Health relationships in the future.

The following table describes the main themes that emerged.

Issue	Detail	Number of times mentioned first	Number of times mentioned second or third	Total mentions (percent)
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding levels • Regular and realistic reviews • Reflect increasing obligations / changing environment • Funding compliance/ infrastructure costs • Parity with ACC • Direct from Ministry – not through DHBs • Resourcing for innovative initiatives / holistic services • Age boundaries to funding • Retention of surpluses 	10	11	21 (40%)
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent contact • More face to face visits • Proactive communication • Access to account manager easier • Open communication 	12	6	18 (35%)
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat us with respect • Greater levels of trust required • Know / abide by Treasury Guidelines • Partnership relationships not contract relationships • Be honest • Treat as an equal 	8	10	18 (35%)
Contracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate contracting • Faster contract renewals • Focus on longer term 	7	8	15 (29%)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> outcomes • Meaningful reporting • Respond to accountability reporting in a timely manner • Need opportunity to negotiate • Warning required if not going to renew contract • Less restrictive contracts 			
Policy development / service planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater involvement by NGOs • Better consultation • Input into contract specifications 	5	8	13 (25%)
Recognition of NGO sector and its potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the work NGOs do • Provide opportunities to be innovative 	2	6	8 (15%)
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater levels of transparency in purchasing decisions • Transparent negotiations • Transparency in MoH workings 	2	6	8 (15%)
Workforce funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parity with public sector • Parity in FTEs nationwide • Funded for management staff 	1	4	5 (10%)

TOP THREE THINGS FOR THE NGO WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS WITH DHBNZ

34 NGOs responded to a question asking for the top three things to address with DHBNZ to assist in good NGO – DHB relationships. The following main themes emerged:

Issue	Number of times mentioned first	Number of times mentioned second or third	Total mentions (percent)
Funding	9	10	19 (56%)
Communication	1	9	10 (29%)
Relationships	5	3	8 (24%)
Valuing / recognizing NGOs	3	4	7 (22%)
Involvement in policy development / service planning	3	3	6 (18%)

THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING HEALTH AND DISABILITY NGOS IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

64 NGOs responded to a question asking about the three most important issues facing the health and disability NGO sector in the next five years. The main ones that emerged included:

Issue	Number of times mentioned first	Number of times mentioned second or third	Total mentions (percent)
Funding / sustainability	34	21	55 (86%)
Workforce issues	10	23	33 (52%)
Impact of policies ²	2	11	13 (20%)
Increase in demand for services	2	8	10 (16%)
Need for changes to service delivery to meet changing community needs	3	5	8 (13%)
Increased compliance demands and costs involved	2	5	7 (11%)
Reducing numbers of volunteers	1	4	5 (8%)

² Mention of various policies including PHO environment, no implementation plan for disability strategy, various disability policies relating to respite services, housing – no one mentioned more than others