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**Health Quality &
Safety Commission**
Te Tāhū Hauora



The New Zealand Health and Disability System Safety Strategy

2026 to 2036

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Read the full document at:

<https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/new-zealand-health-and-disability-system-safety-strategy/> (or
shortened URL: <https://tinyurl.com/29rtn56c>)

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The New Zealand Health and Disability System Safety Strategy

2026 to 2036

Strengthening the foundations for system safety

Executive summary

The New Zealand Health and Disability System Safety Strategy (the strategy) (Figure 1) sets a clear, system-wide direction for strengthening quality and safety as a foundation for people-centred care for the next 10 years. It reflects contemporary safety science, recognising that quality and safety is shaped by how the system is designed, led and supported, rather than by the actions of individuals alone.

The strategy is grounded in four guiding principles that, together, shape how system safety is understood and strengthened. It places patients and whānau at the heart of the system. In this document, we use the word "patient" to refer to any person who engages with the health and disability system in New Zealand at any stage of their life. The strategy recognises that to deliver safe care, effective and collaborative relationships across the health and disability system are required.

The strategy emphasises the need for learning and improvement to be continuous and shared and for the workforce to be supported and culturally safe in order to deliver care reliably. Taken together, these principles aim to reduce potentially avoidable harm, build trust and ensure that different levels of need are met with appropriately different responses so that outcomes are fair and consistent across the population.

Five interconnected focus areas translate these principles into action. They identify where early, deliberate action is required to strengthen the foundations of system safety and where collective effort will deliver the greatest impact. The immediate priority is collective action and accountability, which establishes the leadership, structures and shared expectations needed to coordinate system safety activity. The remaining focus areas describe how the system will build capability over time to support continuous improvement, enable and support the workforce, strengthen patient and whānau partnership, and improve the use of information and learning.

The focus areas are the platform for delivery. They are where the detailed system safety action plan will be developed, agreed and implemented. Taken together, they are intended to produce a more connected and resilient health and disability system; one that enables system-wide leadership with a strong focus on quality and safety, enhanced patient and workforce engagement and greater

system-wide learning and improvement. Over time, this will collectively support safe, quality, people-centred care.

Transcriber's Note: Figure 1 shows a vertical flow diagram of the New Zealand Health and Disability System Safety Strategy: from vision to action across the health and disability system.

At the top is the vision: A health and disability system that collectively supports safe, quality, people-centred care.

Below the vision is a two-directional arrow pointing between the vision and the guiding principles. These principles are:

- Patients* and whānau at the heart of the system
- Collaborative relationships across the system
- Building the capacity for learning and improvement
- Enabling and supporting the workforce.

Below the guiding principles, is a two-directional arrow pointing between the guiding principles and the five focus areas. These focus areas are:

- Collective action and accountability: Strengthening shared leadership, coordination, and responsibility for system safety across agencies and the sector;
- Continuous improvement: Improving how harm information, evidence, and experience are brought

together and used to drive coordinated system improvement;

- Enabling and supporting the workforce: Building the capability, culture, and conditions the workforce needs to deliver safe care within a dynamic and complex environment;
- Enabling and supporting people, whanau, communities: Strengthening lived experience, equity, access, and culturally safe care as core components of system safety;
- Information and learning: Strengthening how the system identifies risk, learns from harm, and translates learning into sustained improvement.

Below the five focus areas, is a two-directional arrow pointing between the five focus areas and the System safety action plan. The system safety action plan says: The focus areas guide the development of the detailed system safety action plan.

End of The New Zealand Health and Disability System Safety Strategy