

Community Programmes 2025

Alongside our work on the strategy, we continue to deliver a wide range of longstanding and new initiatives that prioritise improving the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.



Sibling Camps

Siblings often play an essential role in the lives of their brothers or sisters with intellectual disabilities. Sibling camps or retreats allow them to connect with others in similar situations, understand their sibling's experiences better, and receive support to manage their own feelings. This year a total of 150 siblings will attend six camps in Auckland, Christchurch, Waikato, Te Puke, Manawatū and Whangārei.

Feedback:

"Thank you so much for setting up this camp. Lucas had such a wonderful time. It was beautiful to see him really trying to implement the positive engagements that must have been discussed at camp with his brother, and he's taught us all to play the emotion bus game at home. So grateful that we had this opportunity!"

"I would say you might feel a bit nervous before you go, but it is the most fun I've had ever!"

Report - From Data to Dignity 2025: Reality Check

The report *From Data to Dignity 2025: Reality Check* provides updated health and wellbeing indicators for New Zealanders with intellectual disability. The first report was released in 2023. This update (to be published in December 2025) will provide new indicators and a clearer picture of how outcomes are changing over time

Impact: While the 2025 report is yet to be released, the 2023 report has served as a catalyst for research, policy advocacy and public discourse, aiming to address the systemic inequities faced by individuals with intellectual disabilities in New Zealand.

From Data to Dignity 2025: Reality Check

Updated health and wellbeing indicators for New Zealanders with intellectual disability

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July 2025



Kapa haka

IHC holds a biennial national kapa haka festival, Te Anga Pāua o Aotearoa, for people supported by IHC/IDEA Services. Every alternate year it holds regional kapa haka competitions. This year more than 550 people from 26 IDEA Services areas are competing in the regional kapa haka competition. A further nine groups from outside IDEA Services are also taking part.

They have a wide-ranging and positive impact:

- Provide a platform for Māori with intellectual disabilities to express identity, build pride and connect with culture
- Strengthen whānau and iwi relationships
- Promote inclusion and visibility for people with intellectual disabilities
- Create a supportive, non-competitive space that fosters belonging and full cultural participation

Feedback:

"I love kapa haka, because I feel confident, and proud in being a Māori."

"It's been a privilege being a leader. We all take part as a family, as a group. Being a leader, it's doing the best I can for the group."



People with intellectual disability and volunteering

IDEA Services partners with the Student Volunteer Army (SVA) to provide volunteer opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. Volunteering helps build skills, confidence and social connections while promoting visibility and inclusion in the community.

More than 300 people with intellectual disabilities took part in the programme during the 2024-25 year, contributing more than 32,000 volunteer hours.

Feedback:

"Receiving my [SVA Bronze] pin made me feel good. It was another challenge I had overcome, and it made me happy that I had achieved something. I feel like I have a goal in my life. My advice to other people thinking about volunteering? Go and have a look and try it out. It's okay to go with a Support Worker if you need help."

- Cora

Advocacy

Advocacy is about shifting law, funding, policy, and practice so people with intellectual disabilities have real choice, control and belonging in their communities.

The principles underpinning our advocacy are:

- Lived-experience leadership by people with intellectual disabilities
- Honouring Māori rangatiratanga and cultural frameworks
- Rights-based
- Evidence-driven
- Accessibility
- Safety with autonomy using supported decision-making.

Things we will achieve before the end of 2025:

- Creating a podcast established for people with an intellectual disability by people with intellectual disabilities.
- Launching the updated research findings for the 'From Data to Dignity: Health and Wellbeing Indicators for New Zealanders with Intellectual Disabilities'.
- Releasing a health literacy guide for people with intellectual disabilities and their families and supporters.
- Releasing 'Navigating the System'. This is a guide for people navigating government and community services. It uses key events in the life of a person with an intellectual disability to describe what is available and what might be possible.

Things we are working on that will continue in 2026 and beyond:

- Launching the research findings for the 'Barriers and Enablers to Employment for People with Intellectual Disability'.
- Releasing research into the impact of the annual health checks funded by IHC and Spectrum Care Trust for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Establishment of a governance and leadership succession planning programme for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Progress on IHC's case to the Human Rights Tribunal regarding the ability of children with intellectual disability to attend their local school and receive a full education.
- Launching IHC's public campaign to encourage and support community allies of inclusion.
- Development of further strategies and actions to progress the calls to action, to improve the lives of people with an intellectual disability across health, poverty, employment, the justice system, housing, services and support for Māori.

Property

Homes for people with intellectual disability

IHC announced a major change before this strategy – our focus is on creating and maintaining homes for people with intellectual disability.

Over the last decade IHC has invested in social housing – housing that benefits all New Zealanders with an acute housing need, including many people with intellectual disability. We made that investment to earn a financial return. The change we have made means that we will invest in homes first and foremost for people with intellectual disability.

We have also completed a reassessment of the 600+ homes where we support people with intellectual disability – often referred to as residential services. Every home has been assessed to determine whether it is fit-for-purpose and meeting the needs of the people who live there and if not, what changes are needed. Where a home is not fit-for-purpose, we will sell it or fix it. Everyone should have a warm, safe and accessible home.

People with intellectual disability want more choice about where they live and who they live with. This requires our efforts around housing – led by IHC – to work with our communities and the people who support them. We have made changes to bring these two efforts closer together and to ensure an absolute focus on quality, safe and affordable housing for people with intellectual disabilities.