

15 April 2008

Hon. David Cunliffe
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Minister

Re: Request to review the consultation timeframe of the Health & Disability Services (Safety) Act 2001 (the Act)

The members of Platform who provide residential support services for people with experience of mental illness, disability and addictions, wish to express their concern at the unreasonably short timeframe for consultation about proposed changes of the coverage of the above Act.

Determining the definition of community residential services for the purposes of the Act to include services providing for fewer than five people has long range implications and requires meaningful discussion. We understand from Ministry officials that the consultation timeframe for this complex process is to be accelerated with a completion date for advice to you by the end of May 2008. In order to ensure good process and avert unintended consequences we would ask that you work to the original consultation which indicated completion at the end of September 2008.

There are such a wide range of diverse agencies that could be affected by such changes and in the Mental Health sector there are potentially far reaching consequences that could impact on client self determination, privacy and the model of service delivery that would all need to be considered. This review also needs to be seen in the context of a major review lead by the Ministry of Health of purchasing within the mental health sector.

We believe these complex matters cannot be addressed in such a short consultation time period and we request that the sector be given the time that it will take, rather than be driven by unrealistic timeframes.

Yours sincerely

Marion Blake
CEO

cc. Ruth Dyson, Minister of Disability Issues