



**People First NZ**  
Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi

## Press Release

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### **People First NZ celebrates 21 years.**

Today People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi turns 21 years old. People First is a disabled person organisation run by and for people with learning (intellectual) disability.

People First started in the State of Oregon, United States of America in 1974 and today there are People First groups and organisations worldwide in countries such as England, Scotland, Japan, South Korea and many more.

People First New Zealand started in 1987, and it was part of IHC for its first 20 years.

National Chairperson, Michael Aldridge says: “It was really important to members to have our own independent organisation and in 2003 this became a reality”.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2003, the then-Minister for Disability Issues, Ruth Dyson, hosted the launch of People First NZ becoming an independent organisation at Parliament. People First members came from all over the country to join the celebration.

Today People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi is stronger than ever. We have 41 local groups across six regions with hundreds of members. Members meet regularly to learn about their rights and how to speak up for themselves.

As well as our self-advocacy groups we have a range of services that encourage a more inclusive society for people with learning disability, based on the rights of disabled people.

People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi is also part of the DPO Coalition.

The DPO Coalition's collective vision is to achieve Disability Rights in Aotearoa New Zealand in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

There are still many issues for people with learning disability in all parts of life including having enough money to live on, having the right support to make decisions, choosing who you live with and how you live, having a safe and affordable house to live in, getting good health outcomes, life-long learning, and having a job.

National Chairperson, Michael Aldridge says: "We will keep working together so we can make sure that people with learning disability have human rights and are included across Aotearoa New Zealand. Turning 21 is important to us and today I want to thank all the members, volunteers and the team of employees and contractors past and present, our funders and allies."

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### **Services we provide:**

[Disability Information and Advice Service \(DIAS\)](#)

[Make It Easy Kiā Māmā Mai translation service.](#)

[Learn with Us Ako i Tō Mātou Taha education service.](#)

[Consultations](#)