

A Guide for Carers

He Aratohu mā ngā Kaitiaki

This Guide lets you know about a range of help available for people who care for and support family, whānau, āiga or friends with a physical or mental health condition, a disability, an injury or an illness.

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Are you a carer?

Whether you're new to caring or have years of experience looking after a family or whānau member or someone close to you, this Guide will show you what support and services are available, how they might help you and how to get in touch with them.

Depending on your situation, caring can mean different things. Caring is looking after or helping someone close to you (such as a friend or family member) who needs help with everyday living because of a disability, health condition, illness or injury. You could be a parent of a disabled child, an older person caring for a sick partner, a younger person supporting a friend with a mental health condition, or a neighbour supporting someone affected by drug misuse.

The care you give could be needed suddenly because of an unforeseen injury or illness, or gradually as the needs of the person you support increase over time (for instance, caring for a parent or grandparent).

The time you spend caring may be for a few hours a week or take up most or all of your time, like a full-time job. Many carers spend much of their time caring and the work they do and the contribution they make is invaluable.

Caring can be challenging at times and take up a lot of your time, but there is information, support and services available to help.

Important information and disclaimer

Caring situations and circumstances vary widely. While the material in this Guide provides general information on the range of supports and assistance available, it is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any individual or organisation.

Different government agencies have different eligibility criteria for support, as well as different definitions for the term "full-time carer" and potentially other terms. If you need to make queries or find out how the information applies to your situation, please contact the government agencies listed in the Directory - see page 49.

We have taken reasonable measures in our capacity to ensure the quality and accuracy of the information. The information in this Guide will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, however if you notice that there is content out of date, please email carers.strategy@msd.govt.nz



Money

This section gives you information about different types of financial help that may be available to you.



How to get financial support

There may be different types of financial help available to you, depending on your situation.

Work and Income provides financial support for people in need. Talk to Work and Income, or Senior Services if you're 65 and over, to find out what types of support you may be able to receive.

You may also find it helpful to use Work and Income's "Check what you might get" tool. Go to workandincome.govt.nz and choose **Check what you might get**.

Depending on your needs, other places you may be able to get help include the Accident Compensation Corporation, Inland Revenue and the Ministry of Health. The table below, and the following pages, describe some types of financial support that may be available and who to contact.

For information on how to contact these organisations, please see the directory on page 50.

Table of financial support

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Need	Available financial support	Who to contact	See page
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Help with housing costs	Accommodation Supplement	Work and Income	17
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Respite	Carer Support subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health NASC District Health Boards NASC 	30
Help getting around	National Travel Assistance Scheme for Health and Disability Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health NASC District Health Boards NASC 	20
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Financial support

Supported Living Payment (SLP) for full-time carer

This is a weekly payment if you're caring full-time for someone with a serious health condition or disability who is not your partner. To be able to get this payment, the person you care for must:

- need full-time care
- be your child, a family member (other than your spouse or partner), or a member of your community
- otherwise need hospital-level or residential care (or equivalent).

When applying for this payment, a doctor will need to fill out a medical certificate about the person you're caring for.

Eligibility for this payment, and the rate of payment, depends on how much you and your partner (if you have one) earn.

If the person that you are caring for is your partner, you will not be eligible for Supported Living Payment as a carer. However, if your partner receives Supported Living Payment for a health condition, injury or disability, you may be able to be included in their benefit (see page 11) at the married rate.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Supported Living Payment**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Help at home after an injury

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) pays entitlements, including help at home, to a person with a covered injury. If a person with a covered injury chooses to have you care for them, ACC may be able to pay you if they are a family or whānau member, or a friend, and you are providing care for longer than someone naturally would for that person.

There are two types of help at home:

- home help – to help with cleaning and looking after a person at home
- attendant care – to help with personal care such as showering and dressing.

An assessor will work with the injured person to identify any injury related need, including what kind and how many hours of support is needed. ACC will then ask the person you're caring for how they would like to pay for the care you provide. These options include ACC paying you (the carer) directly, or ACC paying the person you're caring for and they pay you.

Inland Revenue Department (IRD) treats these payments you receive as income, which means you are responsible for paying income tax and possibly GST. Contact Inland Revenue for more information on income tax and GST, or visit ird.govt.nz

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit acc.co.nz and choose **I'm injured > Types of ongoing support > Help at home**, or
- » call **0800 101 996**.

Income support for the person being cared for

Supported Living Payment (for the person you care for)

This is a weekly payment made to people who have a health condition, injury or disability.

To get this payment a person must be permanently (expected to continue for at least two years) and severely restricted in their ability to work because of their health condition, disability or injury, or total blindness.

When a person is applying for this payment, they will need to give Work and Income information that confirms their condition and why it stops them from working.

To find out more or to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Supported Living Payment**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Jobseeker Support Health and Disability

This is a weekly payment for people who cannot work, or are working fewer hours because of a health condition, injury or disability.

A Work Capacity Medical Certificate (or medical certificate with the needed information) is required to get this payment. A person may have part-time work obligations if they have the capacity.

To get this payment you must have no income or income lower than the amount that would fully reduce the Jobseeker Support benefit.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Jobseeker Support**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

New Zealand Superannuation (NZ Super)

This is a fortnightly payment made to people aged 65 or older who:

- have lived in New Zealand for at least 10 years since turning 20, and
- have lived in New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Niue or Tokelau (or a combination of these) for at least 5 years since turning 50.

You may qualify for NZ Super with less than 10 years residence if you have migrated to New Zealand from a country that New Zealand has a social security agreement with.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **New Zealand Superannuation**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Veteran's Pension

This is a fortnightly payment made to people aged 65 or older who have served in New Zealand's Armed Forces and have qualifying operational service. It is paid at the same rate as New Zealand Superannuation, but has some added benefits.

To find out if the person you care for is eligible, contact the Veteran's Pension Centre – see page 55.

Financial support if you're caring for a child

Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) Subsidy

This payment helps families with the costs of before and after school care for up to 20 hours a week, and school holiday programmes for up to 50 hours a week.

To get the OSCAR Subsidy a person must be the main carer of a dependent child or young person who is under 14 years old (or under 18 years old if the main carer gets a Child Disability Allowance for them) and unable to take care of the child or young person because of work, study, illness or disability.

Entitlement to this payment depends on how much you and your partner earn.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Out of School Care and Recreation Subsidy**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Childcare Subsidy

This payment helps families with the cost of preschool childcare.

To get the Childcare Subsidy, you must be the main carer of a child under 5 years old, over 5 years old if they are waiting until the first term to start school, or under 6 years old if the main carer gets a Child Disability Allowance for them.

To get this payment, you and your partner's earnings must be under the income limit.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Childcare Subsidy**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Working for Families Tax Credits

Working for Families is help for families with dependent children aged 18 years or younger. Payments vary depending on how much you and your partner earn and how many children there are in the family.

There are four different types of payments, and families can get more than one.

Payment	Description
Family tax credit	Payment made for each dependent child in the family. Getting this payment depends on your family's income.
In-work tax credit	Payment for families with dependent children who work a certain number of hours each week.
Minimum family tax credit	A top-up paid to make sure the annual income of a family with dependent children does not fall below a certain amount.
Best Start	Best Start helps families with the costs of caring for young children. Best Start is paid to all families with a child under one year old, and for up to two more years depending your family's income.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit ird.govt.nz and choose **Tell me about...** > **Working for Families**, or
- » contact Inland Revenue – see page 52.

If you're applying for or already getting a benefit, talk to Work and Income – see page 55.

Working for Families calculator

Visit ird.govt.nz and choose **Calculators and tools** > **Working for Families** > **Estimate your Working for Families Tax Credits** to use the online calculator to see what type of Working for Families Tax Credit you might get.

Child Disability Allowance

This is a fortnightly payment made to the main carer of a child or young person with a serious disability.

This payment is for the extra care and attention that you need to give to a disabled child. It is not income tested.

You may be able to get both the Child Disability Allowance and the Disability Allowance for the same child.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Child Disability Allowance**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Unsupported Child's Benefit

This is a weekly payment to help a person supporting a child or young person whose parents can't care for them because of family circumstances.

To get this payment the child or young person you care for must be 18 years old or younger, single, rely financially on you and not able to be cared for by their parents.

You must be the main carer of the child or young person, and not be their natural or adoptive parent or step-parent. You must also apply for Child Support from the child's parents to help cover what the government pays you and attend a Family Meeting.

Getting this payment does not depend on how much you and the child you care for earn. Income of the child that you care for that is not from personal earnings, such as from a family trust or ACC, can affect whether you can get this payment and how much you get.

There are a number of additional payments and non-financial supports that you may qualify for. These include an Establishment Grant (when the child first comes into your care), the School and Year Start-Up payment and the Extraordinary Care Fund.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Unsupported Child's Benefit**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Orphan's Benefit

This is a weekly payment to help you if you support a child or young person whose parents have died, can't be found or can't look after them because they have a long-term health condition.

To get this payment the child or young person you care for must be 18 years old or younger, single and rely financially on you.

You must also be the main carer of the child or young person and not be their natural or adoptive parent.

Getting this payment does not depend on how much you and the child you care for earn. Other money that the child gets, such as from a family trust or ACC, can affect whether you can get this payment and how much you get.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Orphan's Benefit**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Extra help with costs

Disability allowance (for the person you care for)

This is a weekly payment for people who have regular, ongoing costs because of a disability or health condition, such as visits to the doctor or hospital, or the purchase of medicines, extra clothing or travel.

To get this payment, the person must have a disability or health condition likely to last at least six months, and have regular, ongoing costs because of the disability or health condition that aren't fully covered by another agency or by another payment the person is getting.

This payment can help pay for a number of things, as long as the person's health practitioner tells them that they need it because of their disability or health condition. Examples are doctor's or specialist's fees, travel costs to your doctor, specialist or hospital, heating (over and above what is normally used), medical alarms, or continence products.

Getting this payment depends on how much money the person is applying, and their partner, earns.

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Disability Allowance**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Extra help with costs if you're caring for your partner who's in care

Special Disability Allowance

This is a weekly payment made to people who have a spouse or partner who is in residential care or has been in a public hospital for over 13 weeks.

The payment is for the spouse or partner who is not in care to help with the extra costs of having their spouse or partner in care.

To get this payment you need to be receiving:

- NZ Superannuation or a Veteran's Pension, or
- Supported Living Payment on the ground of restricted work capacity or total blindness, or
- Jobseeker Support, or
- A related emergency benefit

To find out more and how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Special Disability Allowance**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Extra help for people 65 years or older

SuperGold Card

The SuperGold Card is a discount and concession card issued free to seniors and veterans. It gives cardholders discounts at a wide range of businesses nationwide, as well as free off-peak public transport.

A SuperGold Card will be sent to you or the person you care for automatically when you're granted NZ Super, a Veteran's Pension or a main benefit at age 65 or over. If you haven't yet received these types of assistance but are eligible for a card, you will need to apply for one.

To find out more:

- » visit supergold.govt.nz, or
- » visit govt.nz and search **SuperGold card**, or
- » call the SuperGold team on **0800 25 45 65**.

Extra help for people who served in New Zealand's Armed Forces

If the person you care for served in New Zealand's Armed Forces, they may be able to get support from Veterans' Affairs. Support can include funding for treatment and rehabilitation, compensation for impairment and loss of income, and services to keep veterans independent in their homes.

To check your or their eligibility:

- » visit www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz, or
- » call Veterans' Affairs on **0800 483 8372**.

Money to help you if you are going through hardship

One-off financial assistance is available if you, or the person you care for, have an immediate and essential or emergency cost, and can't pay for it another way. Examples of essential costs are bedding, food, health and travel costs. To get this help, you do not have to be getting a benefit.

Getting this type of help may depend on how much you and your partner earn, and how much money or other assets you have, or your partner has. Depending on your situation, you may have to pay back the money.

For more information and to find out the available options:

- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.



KiwiSaver

KiwiSaver is a voluntary, work-based savings initiative to help you with your long-term saving for retirement. It's designed to be hassle-free so it's easy to maintain a regular savings pattern.

You may be able to suspend your KiwiSaver contributions if you're experiencing financial hardship and contributing to your KiwiSaver would mean you cannot afford to pay your day-to-day living expenses.

You may be able to withdraw KiwiSaver funds before you retire if you are experiencing significant financial hardship. Significant financial hardship includes not being able to meet minimum living expenses, modifying your home to meet special needs because you or a dependant family member has a disability, and paying for medical treatment for yourself or a dependant family member.

To find out more about KiwiSaver:

- » visit ird.govt.nz/kiwisaver, or
- » call **0800 KIWISAVER (0800 549 472)**.

Extra help with medical costs

Prescription Subsidy Scheme

This subsidy aims to reduce the cost of medicine by removing the \$5 prescription cost after 20 items.

To get this subsidy, the person needs to have paid for 20 new prescription medicine items from 1 February each year. Once a person has paid for 20 items, they do not have to pay any more prescription costs for the rest of that year (until 1 February the following year).

The person can reach 20 prescription items by including prescription items for the person's partner and dependent children aged 14 to 18 years. Because prescriptions for children under 13 are free, they don't count towards the 20-item total. The pharmacist can link all family members in the system.

Any pharmacy can check records to see how many prescriptions someone has already paid for.

Some medicines may still carry a cost even with a Prescription Subsidy if they are not funded by the government. The pharmacist can advise about any extra costs.

To find out more:

- » visit health.govt.nz and search **Prescription Subsidy Scheme**.

Community Services Card

This card can help with the costs of healthcare. It helps the card holder and their family to pay less for some health services and prescriptions.

The Community Services Card can reduce the cost of:

- visits to people's regular health practitioner, e.g. a doctor or nurse, if they are enrolled at that practice (for the person and their dependent children aged 14–17)
- ACC visits to a general practice (e.g. a doctor or nurse) if the person is injured. The person doesn't need to be enrolled at the practice
- prescription fees
- fees for after-hours health practitioner visits
- glasses for children under 16
- emergency dental care provided by hospitals and approved dental contractors (ask the dental provider if they are an approved contractor)

- travel and accommodation for treatment at a public hospital the person has been referred to outside the area where they live (see page 20)
- home help (see page 10 'Help at home after an injury').

The card can also be used for dependent children aged under 18 years.

Getting this card depends on several requirements, including how much a person and their partner earn.

To find out more:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Community Services Card**, or
- » call **0800 999 999**, or
- » email csc_enquiries@msd.govt.nz

High Use Health Card

This card helps a person with some medical costs (such as doctor's visits and prescription costs) if they have ongoing health problems that mean they often visit the doctor.

This card may be used to reduce the costs of:

- prescription fees
- fees for after-hours general practice visits
- visits to a general practice where the person is not enrolled (the person needs to check with the general practice first).

To get this card, the person needs to have made 12 or more visits to a doctor or nurse at the general practice where they are enrolled, in the previous 12 months. Getting the card does not depend on how much the person earns. The card can only be used by the cardholder and does not give benefits to the rest of the family. The general practitioner will make the application for the card on the person's behalf.

If someone already has a Community Services Card, they don't need to apply for a High Use Health Card because the discounts relating to medical costs are the same. However, for people with a High Use Health Card, there is an advantage in also having a Community Services Card because that card enables enrolled patients to get lower cost fees and also gives subsidies to dependent family members.

To find out more:

- » visit health.govt.nz and go to **Our work > Primary health care > Subsidies and services > High Use Health Card**

Help with housing costs

Accommodation Supplement

This is a weekly payment which helps people with their rent, board or the cost of owning a home.

You don't have to be getting a benefit to receive an Accommodation Supplement.

Your entitlement to this payment will also depend on how much you and your partner earn, and how much money or other assets you have, or your partner has.

To find out more, including how to apply:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Accommodation Supplement**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Rates Rebate Scheme

Ratepayers on a low income may be able to get financial assistance to help with the cost of their rates. The amount of money you may get off your rates depends on how much you already pay in rates, how many dependents you have, and how much you or your partner earn.

To find out more about the scheme:

- » visit govt.nz and search **Rates Rebate**
- » talk to your local council about applying for the Rates Rebate Scheme.

Options for people with high or very high support needs to employ their family member to care for them

If someone has been assessed as having high or very high support needs by a Needs Assessment and Service Coordination organisation (NASC), they are able to employ their family member to provide personal care and/or help with household tasks.

- For people with high or very high support needs due to a health condition, there is an option to employ their family carer through a Home and Community Support Service provider funded by DHBs. The support needs requirement must be assessed by a DHB NASC.
- Disabled people can choose an arrangement to employ their family carer that best suits their circumstances, through:
 - personal budget processes like Individualised Funding (see page 19 'Individualised Funding for Disabled People for Household Management and Personal Care'), or
 - employing their family carer through a Home and Community Support Service provider.

In all cases, a NASC will be able to help work out your needs and the support options. To find out how to contact a NASC, see page 53.

Help at home with housework or personal care

Help at home with housework and personal care is available for some people who have been assessed by a Needs Assessment and Coordination Service (NASC) organisation.

If the person you care for is recovering from an injury, see page 25 'Help from ACC for someone who is injured'.

The person you care for may need help at home due to their disability or health condition. Once their needs have been identified by a NASC assessment (see page 24), the NASC organisation will let the person know what kind of help they can get.

The Ministry of Health and DHBs fund two types of help at home: Household Management and Personal Care.

Household Management may include help with:

- meal preparation
- washing, drying or folding clothes
- house-cleaning, vacuuming and tidying up.

Personal Care may include help with:

- eating and drinking
- getting dressed and undressed
- getting up in the morning and getting ready for bed
- showering and going to the toilet.

To get help with Household Management, the person must have a Community Services Card (see page 16).

For information on who to contact to get help at home, see page 'Getting in touch with a NASC organisation'.

Individualised Funding (IF) for disabled people for Household Management and Personal Care

IF is a way to let disabled people directly manage their disability supports funding allocation. It provides greater choice and control over how and when support is given. A NASC assessment will determine what supports they need and whether IF is right for them. For information on the NASC assessment process, see page 24.

IF can be used by a disabled person to manage their disability supports allocation to purchase household management and personal care provided by support workers (where employees can include family members, contracted personnel or organisations) and pay costs relating to the employment of support workers. It can also be used to purchase respite (see page 30).

IF doesn't cover costs related to medical supplies, equipment, home renovations, leisure, recreation and personal or family costs. You also can't use it to increase the personal income of an individual or family.

If you are not eligible for Ministry-funded services for disability but you are eligible for Home and Community Support Services with funding from your District Health Board (DHB), you may still be able to use the IF process. To explore your options, contact your DHB.

Individualised Funding Host organisations

If the disabled person you care for wants to manage their support allocations, they must use an Individualised Funding (IF) Host organisation. Host organisations help the person you care for to understand IF, help set up, organise and manage supports, or organise payments for the support services.

Host organisations are also required to make sure the service is working well and report back to the Ministry of Health.

For more information on IF, including how to contact an IF Host organisation, visit health.govt.nz and search **Individualised Funding**.

Help getting around

Total Mobility scheme

This scheme enables people with long-term impairments and difficulty using transport to access transport. It works as a subsidised taxi service providing door-to-door transport in areas where providers operate. The scheme subsidises taxi fares by 50 percent up to a maximum fare. The scheme has no minimum fare threshold.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency looks after the scheme's operational administration, working with regional councils to administer and fund the scheme. If you are eligible you will be issued with an electronic card or a book of vouchers from your regional council.

Who can get Total Mobility Scheme help?

The scheme is available to people with a permanent, temporary or fluctuating disability that prevents them from travelling on public transport or getting to or from where the public transport starts or ends.

To find out more:

- » visit nzta.govt.nz and choose **Resources** from the menu, then search for **Total Mobility around New Zealand**, or
- » contact your regional council.

National Travel Assistance Scheme for Health and Disability Services

The National Travel Assistance (NTA) Scheme provides financial support to some people who need to travel frequently or long distances for specialist health or disability treatment.

To get this service, you need to be referred by a specialist (not your doctor) to see another specialist or to receive specialist services. Both the specialists must be part of a service funded by government. For example, a specialist cancer centre, a NASC organisation, or a child development centre.

Some of the costs covered by the scheme include travel, accommodation and support personal costs.

Who can get help from the NTA

Getting this service depends on how far and how often you need to travel, and whether you hold a Community Services Card.

You may not be able to get help from this scheme if you already get, or could get, help with travel costs from somewhere else – for example, ACC, Work and Income, the Ministry of Education.

To find out more:

- » talk to your local DHB's travel co-ordinator, outpatient clinic, ward administrator, a hospital social worker or your specialist, or
- » visit health.govt.nz and select **Your health > Services and Support > Travel assistance**, or
- » call **0800 281 222**, or
- » email travel@health.govt.nz

Mobility Parking Permit Scheme

The Mobility Parking Permit Scheme supports people with mobility impairments to travel more freely within their communities. As a mobility parking permit holder, you can park in designated mobility parking spaces. These are wider than standard parking spaces and are located closer to services and facilities. The permit also allows the permit holder to park in some regular parking spaces for longer than the designated time. This varies depending on where in New Zealand the permit holder lives.

The permit is registered to an individual and can only be used when the permit holder is using the vehicle. There is a fee charged for a permit and to renew an existing permit.

There are clear criteria on who is eligible for a permit and permit holder's responsibilities. This ensures that mobility parking spaces are available for people who really need them. The scheme is open to people of all ages but having a medical condition or disability does not automatically entitle someone to a mobility parking permit.

Who is eligible for a permit

The person you care for may be eligible for a permit if:

- they are unable to walk and always require the use of a wheelchair, or
- their ability to walk distances is severely restricted by a medical condition or disability. If, for example, they require the use of mobility aids, experience severe pain or breathlessness, or
- they have a medical condition or disability that requires them to have physical contact or close supervision to safely get around and they cannot be left unattended. For example, if they experience disorientation, confusion, or severe anxiety.

A doctor needs to confirm eligibility unless you are renewing a long-term permit.

To find out more or download an application form:

- » visit www.MobilityParking.org.nz, or
- » call **0800 227 200**, press 4 for Mobility Parking, or
- » email MobilityParking@ccsDisabilityAction.org.nz



People

In this section, you'll find a range of organisations available to support carers or the person you care for.



Assessing needs

Finding out what the person you care for needs and what help you can get.

If someone you care for needs support for a disability or health need (including age-related), a Needs Assessment Service Coordination (NASC) organisation will help to find out what support is available.

NASC operate the needs assessment and service coordination process on behalf of the Ministry of Health or DHBs depending on the services, supports and population groups.

A NASC organisation will help to:

- identify needs
- outline support services available
- allocate Ministry of Health or DHB-funded support services
- assist with accessing other supports.

NASC services are contracted by the Ministry of Health and DHBs to help the following groups:

- children and adults with disabilities up to age 65 years (Ministry of Health funded)
- people with mental health issues (DHB funded)
- older people needing age-related support
- people with long-term chronic health conditions.

Some NASC organisations specialise in one of these areas and each part of New Zealand may have several NASC services.

If the person you care for is recovering from an injury, see page 25 ‘Help from ACC for someone who is injured’.

The assessment process

Some of the things the NASC will do includes:

- talking with the person you care for, you (the carer) and the person’s family or doctor to understand the person’s needs and eligibility for support
- discussing the person’s concerns and arranging for an assessment to ensure they get the right support for their needs
- assessing what support the person’s family, whānau or āiga can give and what support the family, whānau or āiga might need in order to be able to help the person you care for
- referring the person for specialised assessments by other services if they need them.

The person you care for should have reviews once a year. You or the person you care for can ask for an assessment at any time if your needs or the needs of the person you’re caring for change.

What support services are available?

A wide range of services may be available for the person you care for. Examples are:

- home and community support, such as help with housework or personal care
- facility-based respite care, in-home respite, Carer Support and Individualised Funding – Respite – see pages 29–30
- day activity services, which may include educational, social, recreational and leisure activities
- residential care (for example, living away from home in a residential home for people with disabilities, or a rest home or long-stay hospital care)

- mental health services – see page 32
- other services depending on the needs of the person and where they live.

The best way to find out what support services are available is to contact the appropriate NASC organisation. You can contact a NASC organisation directly or a health professional may refer you.

Getting in touch with a NASC organisation

There are several ways to find a NASC organisation:

- » contact the Needs Assessment and Service Coordination Association (NASCA) for a list of all NASC organisations – visit nznasca.co.nz
- » contact the Ministry of Health – see page 53.

For disabled people up to age 65 years:

- » visit health.govt.nz and search **NASC**
- » call the Ministry of Health’s disability number **0800 373 664**
- » email disability@health.govt.nz

For older people (65 or over and people aged 50–64 who have similar age-related needs):

- » visit health.govt.nz and search **Support services for older people** then scroll down to select the correct page from the list
- » call your local DHB or local hospital and ask to talk to the NASC team for older people.

For people with mental health, alcohol or other drug issues:

Most people should consult their doctor in the first instance. Your doctor may refer you to your local DHB mental health and addiction service, which can assess your need for specialist treatment and/or support services.

Also see page 32 ‘Help if you or the person you care for is affected by mental illness’.

Help from ACC for someone who is injured

If someone close to you is injured, there are supports and services available. Make sure they get treatment as soon as possible. Hospital staff or their health professional will work out what treatment they need and will contact ACC about cover for their injury. The injured person will get a letter from ACC confirming the injury and inviting them to contact ACC for any further help. If the impact of the injury is complex or continuous, ACC will assign a staff member to help with further supports and services they might need.

ACC can only help a person with injury-related needs. To make sure it is an injury which is causing the need for help, ACC uses independent assessors.

ACC pays weekly compensation for injured people who cannot work and helps people to access the support and services they need by contributing to the cost of them. Here are some of the supports and services ACC can help cover.

Financial support

- Weekly payments for loss of earnings if the person you support is unable to work because of their injury
- Lump sum compensation for people who have permanent impairments because of their injury
- Weekly compensation for loss of potential earnings for someone injured before they turned 18

Treatment and rehabilitation

- Doctors' visits
- Consultations with medical specialists, such as orthopaedic surgeons
- Treatment from allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists or rehabilitation professionals such as language therapists
- Surgery
- Other medical appointments and costs

ACC staff can also arrange a rehabilitation plan to help the person you support get back to work.

Support at home

- Help with personal care tasks like showering, eating and getting out of bed
- Help with household tasks like cleaning and laundry
- Childcare, if the person you care for is unable to do this

Support at school

A teacher aide in the classroom can help with learning for people who have challenges because of an injury.

Equipment

- Mobility supports like wheelchairs and postural support aids like standing frames
- Equipment to help with lifting
- Bedding systems that help prevent bedsores
- Environmental controls like automatic door openers
- Artificial limbs
- Aids to help with eating, showering and going to the toilet
- Communications devices such as voice recognition software
- Low vision aids such as screen reading software

Home modifications

- Equipment such as handrails, access ramps, and ceiling-mounted hoists
- Structural modifications to help the person you support to be mobile and independent in their home. Examples include widened halls and doorways or a wet area bathroom

Transport

- Help with getting to and from appointments for treatment and rehabilitation
- Help with transportation if the person's injury prevents them from travelling to work or accessing the community

For more information about what's available from ACC, visit acc.co.nz and choose **I'm injured**.

Help for children and young people with learning support needs

Help is available from the Ministry of Education if your child has learning support needs related to their disability. The need may be a physical disability, a vision or hearing difficulty, issues with communication, learning or behaviour, or a combination of these.

Before your child starts school

Specialist staff from the Ministry of Education work alongside other agencies to support children with learning support needs at home or in all early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo.

What help is available?

Services can include:

- advice for educators, parents and whānau
- information about play techniques to teach the child new skills (drawing, blocks etc.)
- ways to improve social and learning skills and manage behaviour (how to reinforce good behaviour, language to use when talking with your child etc.)
- speech language therapy (helping your child gain language skills etc.)
- education support workers (helping your child one-to-one at their early learning service)
- developing resources such as communication aids (special picture-based communication boards to help your child communicate if they can't speak etc.)
- co-ordinating physiotherapy, occupational therapy and equipment (working with your health and disability therapists if required).

If your child is at school

Most children with learning support needs receive support and services from their school or kura. If necessary, schools can arrange for specialist teachers to provide services or make a referral to the Ministry of Education's learning support services. An assessment of your child may be needed to determine their individual need and the relevant support required for them to participate, learn and achieve at school.

An assessment of the child is carried out by the class teacher and school staff with whoever else needs to be involved including specialist staff, the parents or guardians. The assessment is focused on what support your child needs to learn and achieve. The information gained may be used to tailor an education plan for your child (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP).

Public schools and kura have access to Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour who work with students who have learning and behaviour challenges, their teachers and families. Schools and kura may also access support from Resource Teachers: Vision and Resource Teachers: Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Students with high learning needs

A very small number of children are defined as having high needs and meet the criteria for specialist help through a number of schemes and services available through the Ministry of Education. Some of these students may attend a specialist school.

Some of the Ministry of Education's schemes and services

- The Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) provides resources for students with high and very high needs in the areas of learning, vision, hearing, mobility, language and social communication. ORS support is for extra teacher time, specialist programmes, and therapies and teacher aide support.
- The Communication Service supports children who have difficulties talking, listening and understanding language.
- The Severe Behaviour Service assists children experiencing challenging behaviour difficulties.
- The School High Health Needs Fund supports children with serious medical conditions so they can be included in school programmes.
- The three Regional Health Schools (Northern, Central and Southern) provide teaching support for children who are unwell and can't go to their usual school for a long period (they may have a physical or mental illness), are in a health-funded mental health programme, or are returning to their usual school after being away for a long time and need support.
- Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, The Correspondence School provides distance education for children and young people from early childhood through to secondary. To find out more, visit tekura.school.nz or call **0800 659 988**.

For more information visit the Ministry of Education website education.govt.nz and choose **Parents**, or search for the scheme or service you wish to learn more about.

Who to contact

If you're concerned about your child's learning, contact:

- your Plunket nurse, Iwi Health Authority or early childhood education service (for preschoolers)
- the classroom teacher or the school principal (for children at primary or secondary school), or the school's Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or Learning Support Coordinator if the school has one
- your doctor
- the Ministry of Education's learning support information line **0800 622 222**.

If you need more help

All schools are expected to be open and welcoming to every child whatever their ability. If you feel a school is being unwelcoming or is reluctant to enrol your child because they have learning support needs, then this is of concern to the Ministry of Education. Please let them know if this happens to you – call and ask to speak to the Manager, Learning Support at your nearest Ministry of Education regional office. To find a list of contact details for your nearest office visit education.govt.nz and choose **Our work > Contact us > Local Ministry offices**.

Managing bladder and bowel control

Incontinence is a loss of bladder and/or bowel control and can have a major impact on many parts of a person's life. Incontinence can cause stress, embarrassment and affect a person's social life and self-esteem. There is help available to improve the situation.

What help is available

Continence advisors are available to help people to manage their bowel or bladder problems and can advise which products are best for their needs.

A continence advisor will help work out the factors causing the incontinence and recommend a treatment plan through an assessment. The assessment can either be at the person's home or at an advisor's office. After an assessment, depending on a person's needs, they may be able to get free products, or access the Disability Allowance to assist with paying for product they require.

How to get an assessment?

You can ask your doctor to refer the person to a continence advisor. You, or the person you care for, can also call the Continence helpline on **0800 650 659** for friendly advice. As there can be a waitlist for continence advisors, please call the helpline for initial support.

For a list of continence services nationwide, call the helpline or visit the Continence NZ website at continence.org.nz and choose **Help and Support > Continence service providers for adults and children**.

Taking a break from caring (respite)

This section covers help that is funded by the Ministry of Health DHBs and ACC to help you have a break from your caring role.

It's important for carers to plan regular breaks and time out. Having a break gives you the chance to 'recharge your batteries' and follow your own interests. The person you care for may benefit from a break too.

Visit carers.net.nz to download a free copy of the Time Out Guide, a guide to help carers plan and organise respite breaks. The Carers NZ site includes other respite planning tools you may find helpful.

Taking planned breaks

There are several options available to help you take breaks, including:

- asking friends and family to spend time with the person you care for while you take a break
- employing a support worker to spend time with the person you care for
- paying for the person you care for to do an activity or programme that they enjoy
- having an overnight break while the person you care for stays with a friend, family member, support worker or an organisation or facility with skills in caring for people with disabilities.

The type of respite you might get depends on your needs and the needs of the person you care for and what is available in your area. Your break might be for a short period (half a day, or overnight) or for several weeks depending on your situation.

Respite supports or services are allocated by NASCs and funded by the Ministry of Health (for disability support) and DHBS (for aged care, mental health and addiction and long-term chronic health conditions). Examples include the Carer Support Subsidy and Individualised Funding – Respite (for disabled people). For information on how to find your relevant NASC organisation, see page 53.

If the person you care for is injured, ACC also provides funding for respite, see page 31.

Carer Support Subsidy

The Carer Support Subsidy reimburses some of the costs of supporting the person you care for and is intended to help you take time for yourself.

Carer Support is for people with:

- age-related support needs, mental health and long-term medical conditions, funded by DHBS
- disabilities, funded by the Ministry of Health.

You must be a full-time carer to receive the Carer Support Subsidy, providing more than 4 hours a day of unpaid care, e.g. as the parent of a disabled child.

Usually, you're given a certain number of days a year through an assessment process by the NASC, depending on your needs and those of the person you care for. You choose how you want to take a break and pay for it with the subsidy. You will usually have to pay a 'top-up' for the service.

Carer Support can be paid to:

- friends and some family members
- neighbours or other people who provide relief care
- formal services (e.g. a rest home or holiday programme).

Individualised Funding – Respite for disabled people

Individualised funding (IF) may be available for someone you care for who needs support because of a disability. IF gives the disabled person greater choice and control around how they manage their supports. A NASC assessment will determine what supports they need and whether IF is right for them.

A disabled person can use IF to buy respite support. Respite can be provided through support workers in the person's home or other options which will let you, as the carer, have a break. This can include out-of-home respite where the person stays with a host family, in a facility or takes part in an after school or holiday programme. IF cannot be used to pay parents and spouses for respite care.

For information on how to find your relevant NASC organisation, see page 53.

Help finding a relief carer

MYCARE is New Zealand's largest online community of people seeking or offering home and community support. To pay for your support, you can use private funding or funding made available to you by ACC or the Ministry of Social Development. You can also use Health and Disability Support funding such as Individualised Funding, Enabling Good Lives and Individualised Funding Respite.

To find out more:

- » visit www.mycare.co.nz, or
- » call the team on **0800 677 700**, or
- » email MYCARE at hello@mycare.co.nz

Taking a planned break from caring for someone covered by ACC

ACC can make arrangements to look after the injured person if you want to take a break from caring. These arrangements include carers from another agency coming to care for the injured person while you're away or the injured person moving into a residential respite care facility.

Taking unplanned breaks

Breaks can be planned for or happen because of something unexpected. You might have to take a break because of an emergency or in a time of crisis. It's useful to have a family emergency plan so you know who to call and how to get support. Carers NZ has free tools to help you. Visit carers.net.nz and search **Emergency care planning tools**.

Unplanned breaks when caring for someone covered by ACC

In case of an emergency where you are no longer able to care because of illness or unforeseen circumstances, backup care from an agency is available. The person you're caring for needs to arrange this with ACC. If the person you care for has an ACC case owner, they can help develop a plan in case alternative care is needed, and can help to put alternative care arrangements in place.

If the person you care for wants you to act on their behalf, more information is available at acc.co.nz > **I'm injured** > **Get or give independent help with claims** > **Giving someone authority to act on your behalf**. This means that you can organise support on their behalf, including emergency support.

Taking care of yourself

When you spend time caring for someone else it's important to take care of yourself too. Looking after your physical and emotional health will help improve your wellbeing and reduce chances of becoming stressed and isolated.

Getting out and keeping healthy

The time you spend caring may make it hard for you to have time for yourself. Making sure you take time out for yourself, even if it's for a few hours a week, can make a big difference. Spending that time catching up with friends and family, relaxing and practising mindfulness, getting outside into nature, and doing other activities you enjoy can be great for your wellbeing.

The Carers NZ website has resources online to support your wellbeing, including:

- Time Out Guide – A self-care and respite planning guide
- Are you caring for an older family member or friend? – A wellbeing resource for carers of older people
- Are you a young carer? – Information and wellbeing advice for children and young people in caring roles.

Visit carers.net.nz to view, or to order print copies of these resources call **0800 777 797**.

Resources for carer learning and wellbeing

Care Matters

Care Matters is an organisation aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of carers of disabled people, family and whānau, and disabled people by providing accessible learning information. Care Matters provides information and resources to improve the relationship between carers and the people they care for and increase the confidence and self-esteem of carers.

Care Matters provides online information and resources, has a free phone service for carers and holds face-to-face events like workshops. Workshops are tailored to local carers' needs, occur throughout New Zealand and are free to attend.

To find out more:

- » visit carematters.org.nz, or
- » call **0508 236 23**.

Talking to someone about your caring role

If you're feeling worried or anxious, talking to someone about your situation can help. You may want to talk to family, friends, neighbours, or other carers through a carer support group.

It's normal for people to get stressed at different stages in life. This can particularly be the case when your caring role changes, whether you're new to a caring role and don't know about the different help available, or the person you're caring for has increased caring needs.

If you're finding your thoughts and emotions too much, ask for extra help. Some options are to call:

- » Lifeline **0800 543 354**
- » Youthline **0800 376 633**
- » Healthline **0800 611 116**
- » the Depression Helpline **0800 111 757**
- » the Alcohol Drug Helpline **0800 787 797**
- » the Gambling Helpline **0800 654 655**

You can also visit:

- » addictionshelp.org.nz for a regionalised database of publicly funded addiction treatment and advice services throughout New Zealand
- » yellowbrickroad.org.nz - Yellow Brick Road is for families of people who have a mental health disorder.

Help if you or the person you care for is affected by mental illness

If you or the person you're caring for is affected by mental illness, it is important to seek help and address the issues before they become any worse.

Who to contact if you or the person you care for is affected by mental illness

- Call your general practitioner.
- If you already receive services from DHB mental health and addiction services, contact your DHB case manager if you think your need for support services has changed.
- Contact the nearest NASC organisation which will be able to help identify mental health needs and advise on available support services.
- Seeing a counsellor or going to a support group may be an option for you or the person you care for too.

For more information, visit health.govt.nz and choose **Your health > Service and support > Mental health services**.

For information on finding a GP, counsellor or support group visit mentalhealth.org.nz and choose **In Crisis? > Find a GP or counsellor or Support groups**.

You can also visit the Health and Disability Commissioner website at hdc.org.nz and scroll down to **Mental health and addictions > Where to find help and support**.

Contacts in times of mental health crisis

If you or someone you know has reached a mental health crisis point which requires urgent action, you should contact:

- » your local mental health crisis service. To find the phone number for your local service, visit health.govt.nz and search **Crisis assessment teams**, or go to the front of your phone book and see 'Hospitals & other health service providers'
- » your local hospital emergency department
- » emergency services on **111** and ask for help depending on your situation.

Dealing with abuse or neglect

If you, or the person you're caring for are at risk of, or experiencing any form of abuse or neglect:

- » visit areyouok.org.nz, which has links to family violence support services
- » call the emergency services on **111** if there is immediate danger.

If you want to change your own behaviour, call the 'It's Not OK' information line on **0800 456 450** or visit areyouok.org.nz.

If you or the person you care for has experienced sexual abuse or assault, ACC can provide counselling support. ACC has a specialist team to support people with sexual abuse and assault. Your doctor can help you make a claim.

To get help:

- » visit findsupport.co.nz
- » call **0800 735 566** (Monday–Friday 8am – 5pm).

Staying injury free

Caring for someone can involve helping them to move. Common injuries for carers include back strain from lifting and falls from slipping on wet floors.

Injuries to people being cared for are often the result of being dropped, or bedsores (the same as pressure injuries or pressure sores) from a lack of movement. For information on bedsores and how to prevent them, visit the New Zealand Wound Care Society webpage at nzwcs.org.nz and select **Who we are > Pressure Injury Advisory Group > Worldwide Stop Pressure Injury Day**.

For information on preventing injuries, visit acc.co.nz and search **Supporting people to move at home**.

Reducing the risk of falls

You can prevent or reduce the risk of falls by identifying and removing hazards around the home and improving the health and fitness of the person you're caring for.

For more information on avoiding falls around the home visit acc.co.nz. Choose **I'm injured > Preventing injuries > Staying safe in your home**.

For information and resources for carers of someone 65 or over, visit the Live Stronger for Longer website at livestronger.org.nz

Planning for emergencies

You may worry about what will happen to the person you support if something happens to you in an emergency.

You should spend time putting in place a written plan. Carers NZ has created emergency care planning tools to help you make sure the person you care for will get what they need. These tools include forms for an Emergency Care Plan, an Emergency Carer ID Card, and a Medication Care Plan. Visit carers.net.nz, and search **Emergency care planning tools** to download the forms.

Once you've completed these, give copies to at least one other family member or close friend, and to your home support worker or others who should know about what to do if you're suddenly unable to keep supporting your family member.

The Emergency Carer ID card is designed to keep in your wallet or handbag, or have a laminated copy attached to your keyring. If something happens when you're out, the card will let others know that the person you care for may need help too.

For information about preparing for emergencies and natural disasters, including creating and practising a household emergency plan, and assembling and maintaining emergency survival items, visit getthru.govt.nz

Balancing caring with work and study

Knowing about and using your rights at work

Your caring responsibilities can make it harder to commit to work. As a carer, there are employment laws that protect your rights at work and may make it easier to stay in work.

Your right to negotiating employment agreements

If you're an employee, you must have an employment agreement. This agreement can be an individual or collective (involving a union) agreement and you must be given a written copy. There are minimum terms that every agreement must contain but you have the right to negotiate additional terms. To help with your employment contract, the Employment New Zealand website has an online tool called the Employment Agreement Builder. Visit employment.govt.nz and search **Employment Agreement**.

The online tool includes draft clauses about hours and days of work, which can be changed to fit around your caring situation and the needs of your employer.

Your right to request flexible working arrangements

If you're an employee, you have the right to request flexible working arrangements from your first day at work. You can request flexible working for any purpose or reason, caring being one. Employers have a legal duty to consider any requests.

Examples of flexible working arrangements include:

- agreeing on core hours and choosing when your working day starts and finishes
- working part-time/reduced hours
- weekday/weekend swaps – you swap working on a weekday for working on the weekend
- weeks on/weeks off – you work one of several weeks and take one or several weeks off
- term-time working – working during the school terms and taking paid/unpaid time off during school holidays
- working from home or another location outside the workplace.

How to make a request

Make a time to talk to your employer to work through your request for flexible work and any questions or concerns your employer may have.

You need to make your request in writing and include information to help your employer understand your needs. Visit employment.govt.nz and search **Flexible working** to find out more on how to make a request. You can also download a template form.

Can my employer say no?

Employers are required to consider and respond to requests within one month. They can say no to your request with their reasons explained but only on recognised business grounds or non-accommodation grounds set out in the Employment Relations Act. Talk to your employer about your concerns if you think they haven't dealt with your request appropriately. You can get free employment information by calling the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on **0800 20 90 20** or visiting employment.govt.nz and searching **Flexible working**.

Using your sick leave for someone you care for

If you're employed, you can use your own sick leave to care for your partner, a dependant (your child or elderly parent for example), or someone close to who you provide care for if they're sick or injured and need care. To find out more about sick leave, visit employment.govt.nz and search **Holidays and leave**.

Who to talk to about taking sick leave

Make a time to talk to your employer or manager about your caring situation. They should be aware that sometimes you may need to take time away from work to attend medical appointments, support someone who is unwell or cope with unexpected situations.

It might also be helpful for colleagues to know that you have a caring role, so they can help at difficult times.

Balancing caring with study

Balancing your caring with study can be hard. To help manage caring whilst studying, it may be helpful to talk with your school counsellor, teacher, lecturer or tutor about your caring responsibilities. Your school or university probably will not know that you're caring for someone, so if you let a staff member you trust know, they and the institution where you study may be able to support you.

For tertiary study, the type of support you may get might be relaxed attendance requirements, e-learning opportunities such as recorded lectures or access to lecture slides, note-taking services and flexible deadlines for assignments.

Starting study

Fees-Free Tertiary Education and Training

If you are planning to start tertiary study or training for the first time you may be eligible for fees-free. Fees-free gives eligible learners the equivalent of one year's full-time study (up to a certain amount) fees-free or, if you train or do an apprenticeship through an industry training organisation, the first two years of your training programme fees-free (up to a certain amount).

Visit feesfree.govt.nz to check if you are eligible and for more information about fees-free.

StudyLink

StudyLink is a service that helps students with the costs of study, including help with paying:

- compulsory fees
- course-related costs (e.g. books, laptop etc)
- day-to-day living costs
- other costs (e.g. disability or childcare).

To find out more and apply online:

- » visit studylink.govt.nz, or
- » call **0800 88 99 00**.

Moving into work

Careers New Zealand

The government website careers.govt.nz provides information and resources that help all New Zealanders. This includes free tools and information for:

- young people (and their parents, families, whānau and mentors) who may be at school, about to leave school, in tertiary training or having a gap year, or who have left school early and are unsure about their career plans
- jobseekers, including people who are currently out of work, in between work, actively looking for a job or returning to work, for example, after raising a family or returning from overseas
- people wanting to improve their skills or change their career path.

To find out more:

- » visit careers.govt.nz, or
- » call **0800 222 733**.

Work and Income

Work and Income may be able help you plan and move into paid work or training.

If you want help with your job search, they will work with you to identify your needs, match you to appropriate vacancies, and support you with your search for work and once you're in work.

If you qualify, they may also be able to help you with some of the costs of looking for work and attending interviews.

To find out more:

- » visit workandincome.govt.nz and search **Job search**, or
- » contact Work and Income – see page 55.

Making and resolving complaints

The right to complain about a service is one of many rights everyone has when using a health or disability service. These rights are set out in the Code of Health and Disability Service Consumers' Rights.

An independent Commissioner called the Health and Disability Commissioner is responsible for promoting and protecting rights relating to health and disability services. The Code has ten rights:

- the right to be treated with respect
- the right to freedom from discrimination, coercion, harassment, and exploitation
- the right to dignity and independence
- the right to services of an appropriate standard
- the right to effective communication
- the right to be fully informed
- the right to make an informed choice and give informed consent
- the right to support
- rights in respect of teaching or research
- the right to complain.

The Code covers all public and private providers offering any form of health or disability service. Examples of these services are hospitals, rest homes, disability homes, ambulance services, doctors, nurses, and health therapists. If they are able, the person you care for can make a complaint about a health or disability service, or you can make a complaint on their behalf.

Making a complaint directly to the service

It's usually best for the person you care for to make a complaint directly to the service that has treated them in a way not consistent with their rights. Complaints should be made to the person, their manager, or the person in the organisation responsible for receiving complaints. This might be a nurse manager, CEO, or complaints officer. If unsure who to contact, they can also make a complaint to the agency which funds the service, like ACC or the Ministry of Health.

The advocacy section of the Health and Disability Commissioner's website (hdc.org.nz) has some self-advocacy tips for resolving concerns directly with a provider, as well as a sample letter and complaint form.

Making a complaint to a health and disability advocate

The person you care for can talk to their nearest health and disability advocate if they don't feel comfortable making a complaint to the person or organisation who they wish to complain about, or if they have made a complaint but don't feel satisfied with how it was handled.

An advocate from the Nationwide Advocacy Service will listen to their concerns and explain the options available to resolve the complaint. The advocate works for the person you care for and will help them with the steps they choose to take to resolve the concerns.

The advocate is free and confidential. Deaf and refugee advocates are also available to help people. Advocates are separate from any service providers the person you care for might be complaining about and separate from the Health and Disability Commissioner.

Making a complaint to the Health and Disability Commissioner's office

The person you care for can also make a complaint directly to the Health and Disability Commissioner about the health or disability service they received. The Commissioner will assess the complaint and decide the most appropriate way to resolve it.

Who to contact

In the first instance, the person receiving a health or disability service should make a complaint directly to the service they are wanting to complain about.

They can contact the Nationwide Health and Disability Advocacy Service on **0800 555 050** or email advocacy@hdc.org.nz to help them resolve their concerns.

A complaint can also be made to the Health and Disability Commissioner by using the online complaint form at hdc@hdc.org.nz or by contacting the Health and Disability Commissioner (see page 52 for contact details).

Making and resolving complaints with ACC

The ACC has its own code of rights which sets out what people should expect from ACC services when they claim compensation from ACC. These rights are found in the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights, and include the right to:

- be treated with dignity and respect
- be treated fairly and have their rights considered
- have their culture, values and beliefs respected
- have a support person(s) present
- effective communication
- be fully informed
- have their privacy respected
- complain.

A person can complain directly to ACC by emailing customerfeedback@acc.co.nz or calling the Customer Support Service on **0800 650 222**. To find out more, visit acc.co.nz > **I'm Injured** >

Make a Complaint.

People receiving compensation from ACC are also covered by Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights and the Human Rights Act.

Preparing for the future and communicating the needs and wishes of the person you care for

Making a Health Passport

A Health Passport is a voluntary booklet that a person carries with them when they visit hospitals or other health and disability services. A Health Passport has information about how they want people to communicate with them and support them when they use health or disability services. It helps health professionals make appropriate and safe decisions about their care.

How to get a Health Passport?

A person can get a Health Passport by:

- downloading from the HDC website. Visit hdc.org.nz and choose **Disability > My Health Passport**
- ordering from the HDC website. Visit shop.hdc.org.nz and choose **My Health Passport**
- from a disability support group
- from a hospital, ask at reception or the Information Centre.

There is also a Guide to help a person fill out the information needed for the Passport. A person can get this Guide in the same way they can get a Passport.

To find out more:

- » visit hdc.org.nz and choose **Disability > My Health Passport**, or
- » call **0800 11 22 33**, or
- » email hdc@hdc.org.nz

Advance Care Planning for end-of-life care

Advance care planning helps a person, the important people in their life, and their healthcare team plan for their end-of-life care. Making an advance care plan helps a person have a say over what healthcare they might or might not want in the future in the case that they are unable to.

To find out more:

- » visit hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/advance-care-planning/, or
- » call **04 901 6040**, or
- » email info@hqsc.govt.nz

Organising an Enduring Power of Attorney

An Enduring Power of Attorney is a legal document where a person gives another person (called the attorney) the power to make decisions on their behalf if they become unable to.

For more information about organising an Enduring Power of Attorney, including who can be an attorney, what an attorney does, and how to get an Enduring Power of Attorney, visit the Office for Seniors website at superseniors.msd.govt.nz and choose **Finance & Planning > Enduring Power of Attorney**.

You can also find information through going to the govt.nz website and searching **Enduring Power of Attorney**.

Reviewing your caring role

Supporting someone, especially long-term, can be a big responsibility. It's a good idea to review your caring role regularly, and discuss any challenges with the person you support or with friends and family members. If your friend or family member has significant, ongoing support needs, think carefully about whether a caring role is right for you, and whether you can continue to provide the level of help they need.

What to do if you feel like you can't keep caring?

If the person you support is no longer able to look after themselves and you feel you're unable to provide the level of help they need, for whatever reason, you need to discuss together what is best for both of you. You may find that they're also not feeling happy about your situation. If the person you support is finding it difficult to discuss this, or you're finding it hard to talk to them, it may help to get some input from a friend, family member, another carer, or your doctor or social worker.

Allow time to find out about all the options available, if possible.

Also talk to the doctor, social worker or NASC organisation of the person you support to arrange an assessment (or reassessment) of current support needs. There may be more help you can get at home, for example, increased support from social services, equipment in the home, house modifications, or more frequent short-term stays in respite or residential care for the person you support.

Residential or nursing care may be a difficult option for you and the person you support to consider, but it may be a sensible or realistic option. It may feel like you're letting the person you support down, or that you're rejecting them, but it's important to remember that you can only do so much as a carer. If you want to explore residential or nursing care you should talk to the doctor, social worker or NASC organisation of the person you support.

Caring can be physically and mentally exhausting and there are often limits to the level of care that can be provided at home. It's better to put the best supports and care in place than to struggle on until you reach a crisis point.

When the care role ends

Caring for someone may be a big part of your life, but that might not always be the case. This may be because the person you care for has recovered, can no longer be cared for at home, or has passed away.

Whatever your situation, it's important to know that you're not alone, and there is help and support.

Carers NZ is a good place to start for information and advice:

- » visit carers.net.nz, or
- » call the Carers NZ helpline on **0800 777 797**.

When the person you care for dies

Losing someone close to you can be devastating. If you have been caring for that person, the loss can seem even greater. How you cope with the death of that person is a very personal thing and there is no right or wrong way to deal with grief.

The best support often comes from the people you are close with and who know you. You may find that some people seem awkward around you, often because they want to do and say the 'right thing' but aren't sure what that is. If you feel up to it, tell those around you, like family and close friends, what you need from them and how they can help.

Talking about what has happened and about the person who's died can help you come to terms with your loss and to cope with your feelings. Talking to other people who have been bereaved and who understand what you might be going through can also help.

Your local hospice or your doctor can put you in touch with a bereavement counsellor or grief support network if you would like.

Help when someone has died

Funeral Grant

A Funeral Grant can help with some of the funeral costs of someone who has died. Generally, the person organising the funeral will apply for this.

How much you can get depends on the money or assets the person had when they died. If the person who died was your partner or child, how much you get will depend on how much you earn, as well as your assets.

Contact Work and Income at page 55, or Senior Services at page 54 if the person was 65 or over. Veterans' Affairs also pays funeral grants.

If the person you cared for died as the result of an injury or accident, contact ACC – see page 51

If the person you care for served in the New Zealand's Armed Forces, they may be entitled to funeral expenses from Veterans' Affairs.

To check their eligibility, either:

- » visit veteransaffairs.mil.nz, or
- » call Veterans' Affairs on **0800 483 8372**.

Rebuilding your life

It may take time to adjust to the end of your care role. Having more time gives you the chance for a much-needed rest but it can also leave you with a lot of time.

When caring ends, some practical matters will have to be dealt with soon after, for example, benefits and housing, but you don't need to rush into making decisions about what you are going to do next.

When you're ready, you may want to consider finding new challenges, volunteering or learning something new. If you're looking for ideas, carers.net.nz is a good place to start.

If you have given up work, worked less or not worked at all because of your caring responsibilities, you may want or need to work or return to work once your caring role ends. Visit careers.govt.nz to get information that can help you explore your options, and see information on page 36 about moving into work.



Things

In this section, you'll find a range of help for equipment, housing and vehicle modifications available to carers or the person you support. It largely covers help funded by the Ministry of Health. For information about what help is available from ACC, see page 25.



Equipment and devices for the person you care for

The Ministry of Health funds equipment for people who need help living safely at home. Equipment may be available for people with physical, intellectual, sensory (vision or hearing) and age-related disability needs. People under 65 years with chronic health conditions and high ongoing support needs may also get equipment.

The types of equipment available are for help with:

- personal care, such as eating, going to the toilet and showering (a shower stool or hoist, for example) and household tasks (such as a kitchen trolley)
- mobility, standing and postural support (a walking frame or wheelchair, for example)
- speaking, understanding, writing and making sense of information (such as a communication board, speaking device or software to make it easier to use a computer)
- hearing (such as personal listening systems and alarms)
- vision (such as magnifiers, mobility canes, computer screen reading software, and for some people with severe impairment, glasses).

Subsidy for glasses

Children aged 15 years or younger with vision problems may be able to get help from the Ministry of Health with the cost of vision tests, glasses (frames, lenses or repairs) or eye patches. To get this help, the family or child needs a Community Services Card or a High Use Health Card. Your child will need to be assessed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist (eye specialist). Call **0800 171 981** for more information.

Help for adults may be available from Work and Income. For more information, go to workandincome.govt.nz and search **Glasses**.

Hearing aids for children

The Ministry of Health provides funding for hearing aids and remote microphone systems for preschoolers, and hearing aids for children and young people (20 years or younger) who are studying at school or at tertiary level.

A hospital audiologist (hearing specialist) or a vision/hearing technician who visits preschools or schools can tell you more about the help available.

Hearing aids for adults

The Ministry of Health provides funding for hearing aids for eligible adults who have had significant hearing loss since childhood or have dual disability, or are Community Services Card holders and are:

- in paid employment for 30 hours per week or more, or
- a registered job seeker seeking paid employment, or
- doing voluntary work (more than 20 hours per week), or
- studying full time, or
- caring full time for a dependent person.

If the person needs hearing aids but doesn't have a Community Services Card or meet the other criteria (such as working full-time), they may be able to get help with the cost of a hearing aid through a subsidy. An audiologist can help them apply.

To find out more, visit health.govt.nz and search **Guide to getting hearing aids** and **Equipment for people who are Deaf or have hearing loss**.

If the person you care for served in the New Zealand's Armed Forces, and their hearing loss is related to their qualifying service, they may be eligible for support with hearing aids and appliances. To find out more, visit veteransaffairs.mil.nz and search **Hearing**.

Hearing therapy services

The Ministry of Health funds hearing therapy services free of charge. Hearing therapists can assess a person's hearing needs, provide information about hearing aids and other equipment, teach people how to manage their hearing loss and advise them on the equipment that might help them.

To find out more:

- » visit lifeunlimited.net.nz, or
- » call **0800 008 011**.

How to get help

The needs of the person you care for must be assessed before they can get help with equipment. Assessors can be occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech language therapists, audiologists and other hearing and vision professionals. For who to contact, see page 47 'Who can help you get equipment or home or vehicle modifications?'

To get this help, the person needs to follow the assessment process. If they buy equipment first, hoping to reclaim the money, they generally can't claim the cost back.

Equipment needed for short-term use

If the person you care for needs equipment only for a short time, they can hire it (either from a pharmacy or by asking a local Disability Information or Resource Centre – see page 54) or it may be provided through the DHB. If someone is being discharged from hospital, the hospital should arrange the equipment they need at home. Talk to the social worker, discharge nurse or occupational therapist of the person you care for.

Lottery Grants

The Lottery Individuals with Disabilities Committee provides funding to disabled people so they can buy equipment that enables them to better connect with, participate in and contribute to their communities.

The Committee provides grants for vehicles, vehicle modifications, scooters and other mobility equipment that provides outdoor mobility. It also provides grants to people who have disabilities that affect their communication, so that they can purchase equipment to help them communicate.

The Committee does not fund equipment that the Ministry of Health or ACC or any other body has agreed to fund. Requests can be made at any time using the online portal.

To find out more:

- » visit communitymatters.govt.nz and select **For individuals > Lottery individuals with disabilities**, or
- » call **0800 824 824**, or
- » email iwdfunding@dia.govt.nz

Housing and vehicle modifications for the person you care for

Housing and vehicle modifications for the person you care for

If the person you care for has a long-term disability or is under 65 years with chronic health conditions and high support needs, they may be able to get help from the Ministry of Health with housing and vehicle modifications. An assessment is required in the first instance by a suitably qualified Occupational Therapist (Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) assessor).

If the person you care for is recovering from an injury, ACC may be able to help with housing and vehicle modifications – see page 51 for contact details.

Housing modifications

Housing modifications might include:

- handrails to make it safer to use the steps into the house
- ramps and/or widening of doors to improve access into the house
- bathroom alterations so a person can use the bathroom/toilet safely
- fencing to protect someone who is at risk of injury because of their disability.

A person will not get funding for housing modifications costing less than \$200, or soft furnishings, general maintenance or modifications to their home for work, social or financial reasons.

For housing modifications above a set financial limit, Work and Income will work out if a person needs to pay for part of these costs. A person will not have to contribute to the costs of housing modifications for children 15 years or younger.

Getting housing modifications through the Ministry of Health can take a long time. In most cases, a person can only get funding for modifications once, so they should think carefully about what they will need now and in the future. For example, they could think about moving to a house that will be easier to live in, getting equipment to help them (see page 44) or help at home (see page 18) before planning expensive housing modifications.

Vehicle modifications

Getting Ministry of Health funding support for vehicle modifications will depend on the person's situation.

There are a range of vehicle modifications that may be funded. These might include:

- for drivers – hand controls, seating, ramps, hoists and wheelchair carriers
- for passengers – special seating, safety restraints, ramps, hoists and wheelchair carriers.

In some situations, funding may be available to support the purchase of a vehicle.

How to get vehicle or housing modifications or equipment

An Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) Assessor (usually an Occupational Therapist) will assess the needs of the person you care for. If the person you care for qualifies for housing or vehicle modifications funded by the Ministry of Health, the assessor will forward an application to the appropriate funding agency.

Who can help you get equipment or housing or vehicle modifications?

Call the local hospital and ask for Community Health Services (most Equipment and Modification Services Assessors are usually based there) or talk to your doctor.

To find out more, visit health.govt.nz and search **Equipment and modifications**.

For more help

To find out more about equipment and services, or for advice on the assessment process:

- » contact the local Disability Information or Resource Centre – call **0800 NZFDIC (0800 693 342)**, or visit nzfdic.org.nz/centres to find the one nearest you
- » visit Enable New Zealand's disability information website at firstport.co.nz or call **0800 362 253**
- » call the Ministry of Health on **0800 373 664** or email disability@health.govt.nz



Directory



Money

People

Things

Directory

Extra help with navigating the care and support system

As this Guide demonstrates, there are many helpful services and supports available to support you as a carer, as well as the person that you are caring for. If you'd like help with navigating the care and support system, there are places you can go to get assistance.

Disability Information Advisory Services

Disability Information Advisory Services (DIAS) provide independent information and advice to disabled people, their families, whānau, āiga, caregivers and providers and the general public. They can tell you about Ministry of Health-funded and non-Ministry funded disability support services, and how you can find them. This information may include:

- how to find support and advocacy groups
- how to find a Needs Assessment and Service Coordination organisation
- information about what's available in your community
- information related to a particular disability.

The service is available to everyone, for free. You can visit a DIAS whenever you want. Some DIAS organisations are regional, while others are nationwide.

Visit health.govt.nz and search for **Disability Information Advisory Services**.

Whānau Ora commissioning agencies

Whānau Ora commissioning agencies commission Whānau Ora partners to build on the strengths of whānau and Māori communities to support the achievement of Whānau Ora. As part of their broader role of support, Whānau Ora navigators (kaimahi or kaiārahi) provide direct support and broker support and services for whānau from other agencies. To access Whānau Ora services, contact your relevant commissioning agency:

The Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency works with whānau and families in the North Island:

- » visit <https://whanauora.nz>
- » call **0800 929 282**
- » email info@whanauora.nz

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu works with whānau and families in the South Island:

- » visit <https://www.teputahitanga.org/#landing>
- » call **0800 187 689**
- » email info@teputahitanga.org

Pasifika Futures is dedicated to working with Pacific Island families across the country:

- » visit <http://pasifikafutures.co.nz>
- » call **09 250 5761**
- » email info@pasifikafutures.co.nz

Contact information for organisations referred to in this Guide

ACC

ACC can help if you're injured or support someone who has been injured and needs care.

- » Visit acc.co.nz
- » Call **0800 101 996**

For language and cultural services call **0800 101 996**. ACC has interpreters who can help you.

If you're Deaf, you can contact ACC on deaf@acc.co.nz or fax **0800 332 354**.

ACC branches are listed in the Government Department contacts section of the phone book.

Accessible

Accessible provides and funds equipment, housing and vehicle modifications on behalf of the Ministry of Health in Auckland and Northland. Accessible also funds equipment and housing modifications for ACC clients nationwide.

Accessible manages repairs and servicing for equipment provided.

- » Visit accessible.co.nz
- » Call **0508 001 002**

Carers New Zealand

Carers New Zealand is a national not for profit that provides information, learning, advice and support to family, whānau and āiga carers. It's also the Secretariat for the New Zealand Carers Alliance. The Carers Alliance is a coalition of 47 national not for profit organisations, all of whom support and provide services for carers.

- » Visit carers.net.nz
- » Call **0800 777 797**

District Health Boards (DHBs)

District Health Boards (DHBs) provide and fund health services in their district. DHBs also hold contracts and agreements with other organisations providing health services. However, disability support services and some health services are funded and purchased nationally by the Ministry of Health.

For more information on your DHB, go to health.govt.nz and search **My DHB**

Enable New Zealand

Enable New Zealand provides disability services throughout New Zealand (except for Auckland and Northland) on behalf of the Ministry of Health and ACC. These services include equipment and modifications, disability information services, and disability Needs Assessment and Service Coordination services for people under 65 (in the MidCentral region).

- » Visit enable.co.nz
- » Call **0800 362 253**

Family Services Directory

The Family Services Directory is an online tool that connects people with help and support. As a carer, you may find this directory useful for local support, advice or networks.

- » Visit <https://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/> to see what's available in your region.

Health and Disability Commissioner

The Health and Disability Commissioner's role is to promote and protect the rights of people using health and disability services.

The Health and Disability Commissioner's website has information on rights in a range of languages.

- » Visit hdc.org.nz
- » Call **0800 11 22 33**
- » Fax **09 373 1061**
- » Email hdc@hdc.org.nz
- » Write to **PO Box 1791, Auckland**

Health Quality & Safety Commission New Zealand

The Health Quality and Safety Commission works with clinicians, providers and consumers to improve health and disability support services.

The Health Quality and Safety Commission's website has information on Advance Care Planning.

- » Visit hqsc.govt.nz
- » Call **04 901 6040**
- » Email info@hqsc.govt.nz
- » Write to PO Box 25496, Wellington 6146

Inland Revenue

Information about Working for Families, KiwiSaver and other tax related information.

- » Visit ird.govt.nz
- » Call **0800 227 773**
- » Deaf Link free fax **0800 447 755**

KiwiSaver queries

- » Visit kiwisaver.govt.nz
- » Call **0800 KIWISAVER (0800 549 472)**

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

General queries on employment, flexible working arrangements, pay, holidays and leave.

- » Visit employment.govt.nz
- » Call **0800 20 90 20**

Ministry of Education

Information about Ministry of Education funding and services can be accessed in a range of ways:

- » Talk to your child's early childhood service, teacher, kaiako, principal or tumuaki
- » Visit education.govt.nz
- » Call your nearest Ministry of Education office (visit education.govt.nz and choose **Our work > Contact us > Local Ministry offices**)
- » Call the learning support information line on **0800 622 222**
- » Email learning.supportmailbox@education.govt.nz

If you already have a relationship with a Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC) organisation, you can also talk to them.

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health leads New Zealand's health and disability system and has overall responsibility for the management and development of that system. For information:

- » Visit health.govt.nz
- » Auckland – call **(09) 580 9000**
- » Hamilton – call **(07) 929 3600**
- » Wellington – call **(04) 496 2000**
- » Christchurch – call **(03) 974 2040**
- » Dunedin – call **(03) 474 8040**

Nationwide Health and Disability Consumer Advocacy Service

- » Call **0800 555 050**
- » Free fax **0800 2787 7678**
- » Email advocacy@hdc.org.nz

Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) organisations or equivalent

You need an assessment from a NASC organisation or equivalent to get most health and disability support services funded by the Ministry of Health or a DHB.

Younger people with chronic health conditions (generally under 65 years)

You can find a list of NASC organisations for younger disabled people. Visit the Ministry of Health website health.govt.nz and search **NASC** or phone the Ministry of Health's disability number **0800 DSD MOH (0800 373 664)**.

Younger disabled people (generally under 65 years)

You can find a list of NASC organisations for younger disabled people at the Ministry of Health website. Visit health.govt.nz and search **NASC** or phone the Ministry of Health's disability number **0800 DSD MOH (0800 373 664)**.

Older people (aged over 65 years and people aged 50–64 years who have similar needs)

You can find a list of NASC organisations for older people at health.govt.nz and search **Support services for older people** then scroll down to select the correct page from the list. Alternatively, call your DHB or your local hospital and ask to talk to the NASC team for older people.

People with mental health, alcohol or other drug issues

Call your mental health service at your local DHB. Your doctor or another health professional can also tell you how to contact a NASC organisation.

New Zealand Carers Alliance

The New Zealand Carers Alliance is a coalition of more than 40 national non-profit organisations seeking progress for family carers. Contact is through Carers NZ – see page 51.

New Zealand Federation of Disability Information Centres

A national organisation of Disability Information Advisory Services. Promotes and supports the local provision of general disability information and referral services focused on achieving the aims of the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

- » Visit nzfdic.org.nz
- » Call **0800 693 342**

Office for Seniors

The Office for Seniors provides a wide range of information for seniors and those interested in seniors' issues. This includes advice on establishing an Enduring Power of Attorney and identifying and addressing social isolation.

- » Visit superseniors.msd.govt.nz
- » Email osc@msd.govt.nz

Senior Services

New Zealand Superannuation

For information on New Zealand Superannuation and other support available for older people:

- » Visit workandincome.govt.nz/seniors
- » Call **0800 552 002**

Veteran's Pension Centre

- » Call **0800 650 656**
- » Email veteranspension@msd.govt.nz

SuperGold Card

- » Visit supergold.govt.nz
- » Call **0800 254 565**

StudyLink

For information about StudyLink help or to apply online for a Student Allowance, Student Loan or course-related costs:

- » Visit studylink.govt.nz
- » Call **0800 889 900**
- » Free fax **0800 883 388**

Veterans' Affairs New Zealand

Veterans' Affairs provides support, services, and entitlements to eligible serving and former serving members of New Zealand's Armed Forces.

They're part of the New Zealand Defence Force, but the decisions they make are independent. Where they cannot provide help, they'll work with others to try to find someone who can.

To check eligibility:

- » visit veteransaffairs.mil.nz
- » call **0800 483 8372**

Work and Income

A range of financial support is available to carers or the person being cared for through Work and Income. You can find out more about help available, and what you need to do if you're getting a benefit or other financial support, on the Work and Income website. You can also apply, make an appointment, or update some of your own details online.

Please ask if you want to speak to someone in another language.

- » Visit workandincome.govt.nz
- » Visit my.msd.govt.nz
- » Call **0800 559 009**

Ways of getting in touch for Deaf, hearing impaired and speech impaired people

NZ Relay

New Zealand Relay is a telecommunications service for people who are Deaf, hearing impaired, Deafblind or speech impaired so they can communicate with the organisations they need to contact.

- NZ Relay operates 24/7 all year round
- Everything that is typed or said by the sender is accurately relayed to the receiver
- All calls are strictly confidential and private
- There are no charges for most calls

For more information about this service, visit nzrelay.co.nz

Contacting Work and Income

If you're Deaf or find it hard to talk on the phone, contact Senior Services, Studylink or Work and Income by sending a message to the Deaf Link free-fax on **0800 621 621**, text on **029 286 7170** or email **MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz**

Ways of getting in touch for people who speak another language

Language Support

A new Telephone Interpreting Service for Government Agencies replaced Language Line on 1 October 2019.

This service is provided by ezispeak and helps clients with little or no English to communicate with Government agencies through telephone interpreters available 24/7 in over 180 languages. As was the case previously, call or visit the desired agency, ask for a telephone interpreter, specify the language you want and wait. An interpreter is usually available within one minute to help you talk to the agency.

For more information about the Telephone Interpreting Services for Government Agencies provided by ezispeak, visit ezispeak.nz





**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



NEW ZEALAND
carers
ALLIANCE

