

Cabinet paper Appendix 1: Mahi Aroha Carers' Strategy Action Plan

Carers are family, whānau, aiga, friends or individuals who provide unpaid or informal care to a person or people for reasons such as disability, ageing, physical and mental health conditions, addictions, neurodiversity, injury, or palliative care.

The Mahi Aroha Carers' Strategy Action Plan (Action Plan) is designed to support all people providing unpaid or informal care. This covers all care contexts and care needs, including full- and part-time care, and caring individually or as part of a family, whānau or wider care team. We know that when carers have what they need, they can better support those they care for, which is to the benefit of all of New Zealand.

The Action Plan provides a cross-government framework to better support carers now while addressing the longstanding challenges carers face over time as people, members of families, whānau and households, and within their communities.

How the Action Plan works:

- There are **three priority areas** that carers have told us are most important to them: **Health and Wellbeing, Financial Security, and Recognition and Appreciation**, and an additional area of **Monitoring and Evaluation**.
- There are **nine actions** under the priority areas. Each priority area and action has an **outcome statement** to show what we will work towards over time.
- **Initial steps** are what will happen first (in the 1–3 years following launch) to start making progress towards the outcomes.

Many of us will provide and receive care at different stages of our lives, although not everyone calls themselves a 'carer'.

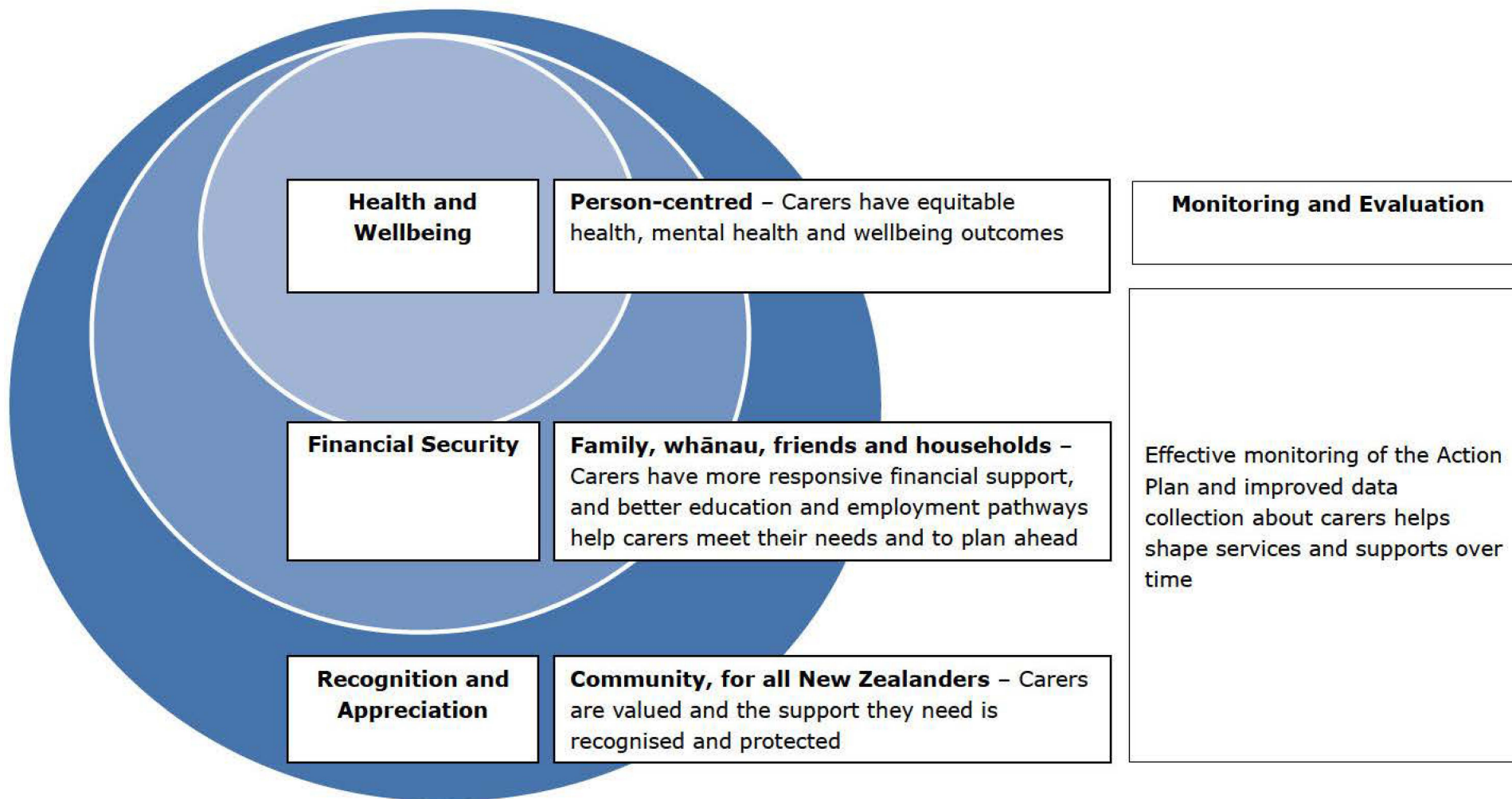
For many, care is a natural part of whānau, family or community responsibility, love or duty. Examples include a:

- spouse providing care to a partner with dementia while navigating their own health needs
- parent supporting neurodiverse tamariki while working part-time
- tangata whaikaha living an everyday life with whānau support
- sibling caring for their brother's health after school
- friend supporting their ageing neighbour after a fall
- parent supporting their adult child with episodic illness to navigate the health and disability system
- person managing their partner's palliative care at home
- older parent caring for their adult child with an intellectual disability.

Implementing and updating the Action Plan over time:

The current agencies partnered with or contributing to the Carers' Strategy and the Mahi Aroha Carers' Strategy Action Plan who are responsible for jointly progressing or contributing, where practicable, to actions are: the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Health New Zealand, Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha, Te Puni Kōkiri – Ministry of Māori Development, Office for Seniors, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Accident Compensation Corporation, Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children, Ministry for Women, and the Ministry of Education.

The Action Plan is ongoing and will be updated and built on over time, and work will continue with carers and across government to ensure it remains relevant to carers and is informed by adjacent work across related sectors (for example, the health, disability and social sectors) which impacts on carers and the people they care for.



Health and Wellbeing Carers have equitable health, mental health and wellbeing outcomes		
Actions	Outcomes	Initial steps
Action 1: Respite and breaks	Carers have more respite and break options, and can access services that support both carers and care recipients to take the breaks they need. Respite and wellbeing break options are flexible to meet the choices and needs of both the carer and care recipient, culturally appropriate, age-appropriate, regionally available, and accessible.	1. Establish: - a national overview of available respite and wellbeing break options and identify gaps, including for specific needs - outreach to let carers know about the different respite and wellbeing break options available, why taking breaks is important, and how they can access the support available.
Action 2: Targeted support	Carers get targeted support from frontline staff, and their needs are considered early and fully.	2. Better support frontline staff to identify and refer carers to the right culturally appropriate, locally available, supports and services. This can build on existing and new approaches, such as targeted carer assessments by Disability Support Services, Whānau Ora, or General Practitioner (GP) support.
Financial Security Carers have more responsive financial support, and education and employment pathways help carers meet their needs and plan ahead		
Actions	Outcomes	Initial steps
Action 3: Financial support	Government financial supports for carers are more responsive to carers' needs and are sustainable.	3. Develop an overview of available government financial assistance for carers, focusing on the levels of support, coverage, gaps, and inconsistencies.
Action 4: Skills, education and employment	Carers get appropriate targeted supports for training and learning during and after caring. Carers are supported to pursue their chosen work and education opportunities to support their financial security during and after caring. Carers' skills and value are recognised, and carers are better supported by their employers and education providers.	4. Review: - what different supports and opportunities carers have to enter paid work, training or education during and after caring - the supports currently provided by 'care-friendly' employers (e.g. carer leave) and how these could inform future actions.

Recognition and Appreciation Carers are valued and the support they need is recognised and protected		
Actions	Outcomes	Initial steps
Action 5: Awareness	The New Zealand public and frontline staff have improved awareness of the diverse carers of New Zealand and their contributions — including those who don't see themselves as carers.	5. Celebrate a national Carers Day in 2027.
Action 6: Culturally appropriate support	Carers get support that suits their culture and needs. All government services use culturally appropriate, mana-enhancing and inclusive ways of talking about carers and caring.	6. Consider how all forms of cultural safety, including te ao Māori, Pacific and other ethnic community needs, can be better integrated into the delivery and promotion of existing services. Cultural safety can also include wider consideration of people's needs when interacting with a service, for example LGBTQI+ identities, neurodiversity, gender, age, disability status, or the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community.
Action 7: Service access and navigation	There is accessible local and national information available on government supports and services, and services are easy to find and use. Information is available in accessible formats and multiple languages. Frontline staff proactively help carers to navigate the supports and services available.	7. Consider how service access and navigation can be improved for carers.
Monitoring and Evaluation Effective monitoring of the Action Plan and improved carer data collection helps shape services and supports over time		
Actions	Outcomes	Initial steps
Action 8: Monitoring	The Action Plan is tracked using a monitoring and evaluation framework. The framework tracks achievement against outcomes over time.	8. Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Action Plan.
Action 9: Data and evidence	Government agencies collect key statistics and information about carers in New Zealand, where appropriate, to understand carers and upcoming needs.	9. Develop a government data and evidence strategy for carers, with the aim of building a consistent evidence base to improve services for carers over time. This will include: • reflecting the Crown's obligations through te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi • considering the current evidence base about carers and community-led evidence • exploring the development and use of a specific carers' marker in administrative data.