



# Draft Carers' Strategy Action Plan

Summary Document

**November 2025**



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

# Contents

- We are seeking feedback on the draft Carers’ Strategy Action Plan..... 3**
  - Have your say .....3
  - Next steps .....3
  
- Introduction ..... 4**
  - Who are carers?..... 4
  - Carers are playing more vital roles..... 4
  - The New Zealand Carers’ Strategy was launched to support, value and recognise carers ..... 4
  
- A new Action Plan has been developed ..... 4**
  - Engagement to date ..... 4
  - Establishing a new ‘rolling’ Action Plan.....5
  
- The draft Action Plan focuses on three priority areas ..... 5**
  - Recognition and Appreciation .....5
  - Health and Wellbeing ..... 6
  - Financial Security ..... 6
  
- Ensuring the Action Plan works ..... 7**
  - Data and Information .....7
  - Governance and oversight.....7
  
- References..... 7**

# We are seeking feedback on the draft Carers' Strategy Action Plan

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is seeking feedback on the draft Carers' Strategy Action Plan (Action Plan), which sets out government actions to support family, whānau, aiga or individual carers.

This document provides a summary of the draft Action Plan for public consultation. You can find a full overview at [MSD's consultation page](#).

The draft Action Plan has been developed through engagement with:

- government agencies partnered to the New Zealand Carers' Strategy
- the NZ Carers Alliance (the Carers Alliance), a collective of over 60 charitable and non-governmental organisations concerned with the needs of family, whānau, and aiga carers
- the Carers' Strategy Advisory Group, which includes representatives from the Carers Alliance and non-governmental organisations that work with and represent carers.

This summary also includes questions to help guide your submission. You can choose which questions to answer, and you do not have to answer all questions.

## Have your say

Consultation will run from 17 November 2025 until 12 March 2026.

You are welcome to provide feedback through one or more of these channels:

- **Submission** by email or a scanned version of your submission to [CAPsubmissions@msd.govt.nz](mailto:CAPsubmissions@msd.govt.nz) or by mail to  
Carers Strategy Action Plan Consultation  
Ministry of Social Development  
PO Box 1556  
Wellington 6140  
New Zealand
- **Survey**, you can fill out a survey hosted on [MSD's survey page](#).
- **Engagement sessions**, you can attend an engagement session. Dates and how to register for these engagement sessions are outlined and updated on [MSD's consultation page](#)

## Next steps

Once feedback has been considered, MSD will finalise the draft Action Plan with a proposed launch date of 2026.

A summary of engagement will be published on MSD's consultation page. All responses will be anonymised, but a list of submitters may be provided. See further details on the use and release of this information on [MSD's website](#).

# Introduction

## Who are carers?

Carers are family, whānau, aiga, and individuals, who provide care for someone close to them who needs additional assistance with their everyday living because of a disability, health condition, illness, or injury.

The term ‘carer’ is used in this document in line with the New Zealand Carers’ Strategy and international examples. Words such as ‘supporter’ or ‘manaakitanga’ may better describe how people see caring as a natural part of what they do for the people they love.

Almost 500,000 people identified as providing informal or unpaid care in Census 2023. However the number is likely much higher, as many do not recognise themselves as a ‘carer’ but may at times need access to targeted carer support.

## Carers are playing more vital roles

As New Zealand’s population grows older and people live longer with more complex health needs, carers will play increasingly important roles.

Despite many not being paid for their work, carers also provide a significant economic contribution, which was estimated to be \$17.6 billion per year in 2022 (Heyes et al., 2022) and is expected to rise.

## The New Zealand Carers’ Strategy was launched to support, value and recognise carers

The New Zealand Carers’ Strategy (the Carers’ Strategy) was launched in 2008 in partnership with the Carers Alliance.

The Carers’ Strategy’s vision is to ensure that: “New Zealand Aotearoa, is a society that values individuals, families, whānau or aiga who support others who need help with their everyday living.”

To date, the Carers’ Strategy has been implemented through three multi-year Action Plans. These time-limited Action Plans contained actions that the Government would take to address key priorities identified by carers and government agencies. The latest Action Plan, Mahi Aroha Carers’ Strategy Action Plan 2019-2023 (Mahi Aroha), expired in 2023.

# A new Action Plan has been developed

## Engagement to date

Since the start of 2025, multiple partners and stakeholders have been involved in the development of a new draft Action Plan to implement the Carers’ Strategy and better respond to ongoing and new challenges for carers.

Development has also drawn on engagement, evidence, and insights since the launch of the Carers’ Strategy in 2008.

## Establishing a new ‘rolling’ Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out ambitious outcomes to make a difference for carers over the long term in its new form as a ‘rolling’ Action Plan.

Unlike previous Action Plans, which applied for 3-5 years with a set end date, the proposed ‘rolling’ Action Plan is ongoing, flexible and outlines key actions over time.

To achieve better outcomes for carers, the Action Plan aims to support carers by addressing longstanding systemic issues, building the evidence base to inform future work, and promoting services that meet the diverse needs of different carer groups.

These aspirations will be progressed through a staged approach, which includes establishing a long-term framework with clear milestones, promoting flexibility, and supporting enduring partnerships between government, the Carers Alliance, and community organisations.



### Consultation question:

A ‘rolling’ Action Plan means that the Action Plan has no set end date. Actions will be updated as needed.

1. What do you think about the change to a ‘rolling’ Action Plan to improve outcomes for carers over the short- and long-term?

## The draft Action Plan focuses on three priority areas

Three priority areas have been developed in consultation with the Carers Alliance and Carers’ Strategy Advisory Group: **Recognition and Appreciation**, **Health and Wellbeing**, and **Financial Security**.

### Recognition and Appreciation



**Outcome:** Carers are valued and the support they require is recognised and protected.

#### Immediate deliverables:

- launch a national Carers’ Appreciation Day
- consider how cultural safety can be better integrated into the delivery and promotion of existing services for carers
- explore targeted approaches for improving service access and navigation for carers.

## Health and Wellbeing



**Outcome:** Health and wellbeing outcomes are equitable between carers and non-carers.

### Immediate deliverables:

- promote the availability, diversity, flexibility and importance of respite and break options for carers, and what these mean for carers
- establish a national picture and assess current levels of available respite services and options
- expand community pathways to better support frontline professionals (e.g., GPs, Needs Assessment Services Coordinators (NASCs)) to refer carers to appropriate supports and networks.

## Financial Security



**Outcome:** More responsive financial supports and improved educational and employment pathways to enable carers to meet their needs and plan for the future.

### Immediate deliverables:

- develop a picture of available financial assistance, focusing on levels of support and coverage and analysis on any gaps and inconsistencies
- map out the potential pathways available to different carers, family, whānau, and aiga
- develop an understanding of the supports provided by employers to carers to inform potential government actions.



### Consultation questions:

2. Do you think the set of immediate deliverables are an appropriate first step towards achieving the Action Plan outcomes? How could we make these more effective for you?
3. How can government work with communities to implement the Action Plan in the short, medium and long term?

# Ensuring the Action Plan works

## Data and Information

A separate priority on Data and Information is included to support implementation and monitoring of progress of the draft Action Plan.



**Outcome:** Improved monitoring and data collection.

### Immediate deliverables:

- develop a monitoring and reporting framework
- develop a government data and evidence strategy.

## Governance and oversight

Options for a governance structure to oversee the Action Plan's progress and implement a review cycle will be developed over the coming months.

This will include further details on:

- how the Action Plan will be implemented
- administration and future priority setting for the rolling Action Plan
- intersections between the Action Plan and, if applicable, other work such as care safety.



### Consultation questions:

4. Is there anything else that agencies should consider when implementing current actions to ensure what is delivered meets the needs of family, whānau, aiga and individual carers?
5. Many of these actions are intended to form the basis for future actions. What should we consider as we review and form future actions?

## References

Heyes, R., & Grimmond, D. (2022). *The economic contribution and sacrifices of unpaid family, whānau and aiga carers in New Zealand, for Alzheimers NZ, Carers NZ, the Carers Alliance, IHC and the Ministry of Social Development*. [Infometrics. Infometrics-Economic-Contribution-of-Caregiving-November-2022-FINAL.pdf](#)

Stats NZ. (2023). *2023 Census. [Dataset] [Unpaid care MSD] MSD*.



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