

Appendix 1: Draft Carers' Strategy Action Plan A3 – Updated October 2025

Recognition and Appreciation: Carers are valued and the support they require is recognised and protected				
Action name	Current State	Future State	Immediate Deliverables	Agency Responsibilities
Public awareness and outreach	<p>People providing care do not always recognise themselves as carers and may miss out on support.</p> <p>Public awareness of caring work could be improved. Frontline staff and government agencies may not always recognise carers as a client group needing support.</p>	<p>Greater public awareness and improved recognition of diverse family, whānau, aiga, and individual carers and their contributions, including people who provide care but do not identify as carers.</p> <p>Frontline staff and agencies have greater awareness of carers as a client group potentially in need of support.</p>	Launch a National Carers Appreciation Day in 2026.	<p>MSD coordinates alongside carer representatives including Carers Alliance.</p> <p>MSD, Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha (Whaikaha), Ministry of Health (MoH) & Health New Zealand (HNZ), Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK), Office for Seniors (OfS), and Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP) contribute where practicable through connections to existing networks and engagement opportunities.</p>
Culturally safe and relevant services	Existing services may not be culturally targeted or relevant for all groups of carers.	<p>Targeted and culturally appropriate services are provided to different carer groups, which enable cultural safety.</p> <p>Culturally appropriate descriptions of carers and caring are promoted and used in government services and communications.</p>	<p>Consider how cultural safety, including te ao Māori considerations, can be better integrated into the delivery and promotion of existing services for carers, family, whānau, and aiga.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, through engaging with Māori, Pacific, and other ethnic communities to improve our understanding of concepts of caring and consider how cultural safety can be better integrated into services for carers. 	<p>MSD coordinates.</p> <p>MSD, TPK, MPP, and Whaikaha contribute where practicable.</p>
Services are accessible and easy to navigate	<p>Feedback has emphasised a need for more proactive government services to support carers.</p> <p>There is a need for services to be easier to find and navigate, both for carers and the frontline staff who support them, and for better information on services which carers, family, whānau, and aiga are eligible for.</p>	<p>Carers, family, whānau, aiga, and frontline staff can easily access clear, local and national information on supports and services available.</p> <p>Government programmes and services are easy to navigate, and frontline staff proactively support carers, family, whānau, and aiga to navigate these, including health and wellbeing and financial supports.</p>	<p>Explore targeted approaches for improving service access and navigation for carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the development of a website, revised Carers Guide or other portal to improve navigation of government-funded supports and services, and enable frontline staff to better engage with carers, family, whānau, and aiga and support them to access services. Identify and consider options to build on existing local, regional and community information, where applicable. 	<p>MSD coordinates.</p> <p>MSD, HNZ, MoH, Whaikaha, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), and all agencies contribute where practicable.</p>

Health and Wellbeing: Health and wellbeing outcomes are equitable between carers and non-carers				
Action name	Current State	Future State	Immediate Deliverables	Agency Responsibilities
Respite and taking a break from caring	<p>Carers face barriers to accessing support with limited break options available at the right time, region or place.</p> <p>Many carers feel the current respite system is “broken” and not meeting their needs.</p> <p>Respite options are typically geared toward aged care systems, services and residences and not always suitable for children or people with complex needs.</p>	<p>Respite and break options are more available to carers, including in-home, out-of-home, emergency, informal, and planned short and long-term options for respite.</p> <p>Carers and care recipients are supported to have breaks and better pathways to services and supports that are flexible, age-appropriate, culturally responsive, and reflect their choices and needs.</p>	<p>National outreach to promote the availability, diversity, flexibility and importance of respite and break options for carers, and what these mean for carers, by developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of examples of ‘respite’, taking a break, and family/whānau/aiga-centred care in carers’ own words to demonstrate the importance of taking a break from caring a series of personal journeys or pathways to show how different carers use, navigate, and experience respite. 	<p>MSD coordinates.</p> <p>MSD, HNZ & MoH, ACC, Whaikaha, TPK, and all agencies contribute where practicable.</p> <p>Support provided by Carers Alliance and Carer representatives through existing partnerships and engagements.</p>
			<p>Establish a national picture and assess current levels of available respite services and break options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential focus: older peoples, people with long-term chronic conditions, palliative care, medically fragile children, disabled people, young carers, mental health and addictions, injury, rural and remote areas, kaupapa Māori options, and respite and break alternatives. 	<p>MSD coordinates.</p> <p>MSD, HNZ & MoH, ACC, Oranga Tamariki (OT), Whaikaha, and all agencies contribute where practicable.</p> <p>Support provided by Carers Alliance and Carer representatives through existing partnerships and engagements.</p>
Carers’ needs are considered early and fully	<p>Carers face multiple complicated and sometimes ‘siloed’ or fragmented systems to access support.</p> <p>Frontline staff, agencies and care assessments do not always provide targeted early assistance or pathways that prioritise the importance of caring to family and community wellbeing.</p>	<p>Targeted and culturally appropriate assistance supports the diversity of carers and care needs.</p> <p>Agencies and frontline staff provide proactive early support to carers, including through the health and disability workforce, care assessments, social services, learning and educational environments.</p>	<p>Expand community pathways to better support frontline professionals to direct and refer carers, family, whānau, and aiga to appropriate, tailored, culturally appropriate, regional and community-level supports and networks (e.g., GPs, NASCs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on existing and new approaches, such as targeted carer assessments through Disability Support Services (DSS) and Whānau Ora, this will include strengthening community pathways and tools to help frontline staff identify and connect carers with local, tailored, and culturally appropriate supports. 	<p>MSD coordinates.</p> <p>MSD, HNZ & MoH, Whaikaha, OT, TPK, Ministry of Education (MoE), and all agencies contribute where practicable.</p> <p>Support provided by Carers Alliance and Carer representatives through existing partnerships and engagements.</p>

Financial Security: More responsive financial supports and improved educational and employment pathways to enable carers to meet their needs and plan for the future				
Action name	Current State	Future State	Immediate Deliverables	Agency Responsibilities
Financial wellbeing	<p>Many carers report they are struggling financially and face material hardship due to their caring work.</p> <p>Some carers feel they are missing out on financial support. Navigating the current system of financial supports with complex requirements across multiple agencies and organisations is difficult.</p>	Financial supports are more responsive to carers' needs and situations and are fiscally sustainable.	<p>Develop a picture of available financial assistance for carers, focusing on levels of support and coverage and including analysis on any gaps and inconsistencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment would provide the evidence base for the development of a range of options to improve financial support for carers. 	<p>MSD coordinates.</p> <p>MSD to produce initial analysis.</p> <p>Other agencies contribute where practicable with data on their services.</p>
Carers have pathways to and from caring	<p>Many carers face barriers to paid employment and learning opportunities which could contribute to their long-term financial security.</p> <p>Many carers also have skills developed as part of their caring responsibilities that are not formally recognised.</p> <p>While paid work, or education leading to paid work, is not appropriate for all carers and should not be an expectation, enabling clear pathways to and from caring could provide additional options for carers to support their financial security.</p>	Carers have clear pathways to and from caring and receive appropriate targeted supports for training, learning and recognition of their skills throughout their caring journey.	<p>Map out the potential pathways available to different carers, family, whānau, and aiga.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could include consideration of a suite of targeted supports for training, learning and recognition of their skills gained throughout their caring journey. 	<p>MSD coordinates.</p> <p>MSD to produce initial mapping and analysis.</p> <p>Particular support from MoE and other education and qualification agencies where necessary and practicable.</p> <p>Other agencies contribute where practicable</p>
		Carers are supported to pursue their chosen employment and education opportunities to support their financial security during and after caring.	<p>Develop an understanding of the supports provided by employers to carers to inform potential government actions, to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> awareness and visibility of carers in paid employment flexibility for carers to manage their caring responsibilities and paid work increased visibility and uptake of employers' support programmes recognition of existing supports and the work already completed by non-government agencies. 	<p>MSD coordinates</p> <p>MSD to produce initial analysis.</p> <p>Other agencies contribute where practicable.</p>

Data and Information: Improved monitoring of the Action Plan and carer data collection to inform services and supports over time				
Action name	Current State	Future State	Immediate Deliverables	Agency Responsibilities
Monitoring and reporting	Previous Action Plans did not include a monitoring and reporting framework to measure progress and ensure accountability.	The rolling Carers' Strategy Action Plan is informed by a monitoring and reporting framework linked directly to progress against outcomes.	Develop a monitoring and reporting framework , which includes identification of core indicators, for the success of the rolling Action Plan with a core focus on measuring progress against outcomes.	MSD coordinates. All agencies contribute where practicable.
Improved data collection	There is a need for a consistent government evidence base on carer demographics and needs, to improve services and supports over time. With the discontinuation of the Census, information on carers will soon rely on administrative data capture, which may not be consistently collected.	An overarching government data and evidence strategy for carers is developed and implemented. Administrative data, where feasible, captures key information on all carers in New Zealand and is used to inform a consistent government evidence base on carer demographics and needs.	Develop a government data and evidence strategy for carers , with the aim of building a consistent evidence base on carer demographics and needs to improve services available over time. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflecting the Crown's obligations through te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, for example through the Māori Data Governance Model exploring the development and use of a specific carers' marker in administrative data. 	MSD coordinates. MSD, HNZ, MoH, ACC, MoE, Whaikaha, Social Investment Agency (SIA), MPP, and TPK provide content where practicable.