

# **The fourth Carers' Strategy Action Plan**

**Consultation Plan –  
October 2025**



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

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## Purpose

This document outlines the plan for consultation on the draft Carers' Strategy Action Plan (Action Plan).

## Background

The New Zealand Carers' Strategy was launched in 2008 with the aim to support, value and recognise the contributions of family, whānau, aiga and individual carers who care for someone close to them who needs additional assistance with their everyday living because of a disability, health condition, illness or injury. There are now well over 500,000 carers in New Zealand. Three action plans have been developed since then to complement the Strategy with the most recent, Mahi Aroha Carers' Strategy 2019-2023, expiring in December 2023.

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is leading the development of a new Carers' Strategy Action Plan. This Action Plan is intended to be a whole-of-government approach that aims to make a material difference for all carers over the long term by delineating an initial set of actions that lay the foundation for future work. Feedback gathered from consultation on the draft Action Plan will inform the final Action Plan that will be launched in early/mid 2026.

## Engagement to date

Since the start of 2025, multiple partners and stakeholders have been involved in the development of the draft Action Plan. They include:

- Government agencies that are partners to the Carers' Strategy and have been directly involved in the formulation of proposals and advice.
- The NZ Carers Alliance, which is a network of approximately sixty non-governmental organisations concerned with the needs of family carers and is a longstanding partner to the Carers' Strategy. The Carers Alliance has provided advice and recommendations in the shaping of the outcomes, objectives, and directions of the draft Action Plan.
- The Carers' Strategy Advisory Group, which includes representatives from the Carers Alliance and non-governmental organisations that represent or work with carers. The Advisory Group was established in May 2025 to provide expertise, knowledge, and advice in the development of the draft Action Plan.

## Objectives of consultation

Public consultation will seek to:

- give a broad range of carers and wider stakeholders across New Zealand the opportunity to provide their feedback on the draft Action Plan
- reflect collaboration with the Carers Alliance and other partners in developing the draft Action Plan and acknowledge the feedback and insights received from carers over the years

- clearly articulate the change in format to a new rolling Action Plan that will be updated on a regular basis
- ensure the objectives of the New Zealand Carers' Strategy are met by collaborating closely with agencies and partners.

## Consultation Principles

The guiding principles below have informed our consultation approach:

- establish a clear purpose so that the aims and boundaries of participation are evident to all and expectations and risks are managed
- leverage existing consultation and engagement processes, partnerships, relationships, and approaches where possible to enhance efficiency and make the best use of people's time
- ensure diversity, accessibility and inclusiveness through equal and fair access to the participation process by all appropriate groups and individuals and ensuring consultation material is provided in alternate formats and language preferences
- demonstrate ethical treatment, respect, and sensitivity, understanding the individuals and groups involved in participation, and interacting with them in ways that reflect awareness of their culture, circumstances, and values
- provide clear communication through accurate and timely information and building in feedback loops so participants understand how their participation has been translated into action
- tailor approaches to how people and partners want to engage, recognising that engagement is not a one-size-fits-all model and approaches should be flexible to the reality of carers' lives.

## Consultation approach

This consultation approach has been designed with the understanding that the involvement of carers and representative organisations across New Zealand will be key to ensure that the Action Plan reflects their priorities, voices and experiences. The involvement and engagement of the Carers Alliance will be crucial throughout the process and to ensuring the success of the consultation.

## Channels

It is important that the consultation is accessible to all parts of the community. Offering multiple channels for engagement creates opportunities for people to provide their feedback in ways and through mediums that suit them, allowing a wide and diverse group of stakeholders to participate. A combination of digital and non-digital formats will ensure that people are not excluded due to technology constraints.

The selection of channels also takes into account the capacity and resource constraints of the MSD team to deliver engagement and analyse feedback.

Consultation channels will comprise:

- submissions
- survey
- engagement sessions:
  - community workshops
  - targeted workshops
  - online workshops.

## Submissions

Submissions on the draft plan will be invited, with the following questions provided to guide feedback:

- Do you agree with the proposed change to a rolling Action Plan, which aims to make a difference for carers over the short and long-term?
- Do you agree with the proposed actions, outcomes, and immediate deliverables? How often do you think these should be reviewed?
- What should agencies consider when developing and implementing actions to ensure what is delivered meets the needs of family, whānau, aiga and individual carers?
- What other areas actions do you think should be considered either immediately or in the future? Why?
- What are some initiatives underway within the government or community that can be built on to help advance progress against the outcomes?

Stakeholders will be able to submit in the following ways:

- send an email or a scanned version of their submission to an MSD email address
- by mail to an MSD postal address (we will investigate the possibility of providing a Freepost number).

## Survey

A simple survey will allow those who would prefer not to complete a full submission to still provide their feedback. The survey will be online, hosted on MSD's consultation platform. We could also make hard copies of the survey available to community organisations for their stakeholders to complete – the provider could scan or post these back to MSD.

The survey will be designed to gather quantitative responses that contribute to the qualitative feedback we will receive through other engagement channels. A maximum of five survey questions could include:

- ranking the actions in the plan
- selecting prioritised issues from a dropdown list
- asking how often the rolling Action Plan should be updated.

We will avoid open text fields given the resource and time needed for analysis. Survey respondents who would like to provide more information will be invited to send in a submission.

## Engagement sessions

We will run three different styles of engagement sessions in a variety of formats concurrently. Given the tight timelines of our consultation period, this will allow us to deliver engagement sessions for a large number of stakeholders while providing them with flexibility and options to engage.

In-person and online platforms will be used, and scheduling will consider appropriate times of day to allow for caring, work or other responsibilities.

Planning and promotion of the sessions will be done well in advance through agency channels, partners and community groups to maximise the time we have for engagement sessions.

Questions for the engagement sessions will be developed based on those asked through the submissions and survey, and will be adapted to reflect the knowledge and experience of the stakeholders present.

Other agencies will be invited to attend MSD-hosted workshops and online sessions, either as subject matter experts to take any questions and/or as notetakers.

### Community workshops

Partnering with Carers Alliance members, community leaders and existing community groups will ensure consultation has reach across New Zealand as well as engaging with a broad range of population groups and types of carers. Sessions run by local community groups are more accessible to carers within communities and therefore should have a high rate of engagement.

MSD will provide presentation packs to groups and organisations who choose to run local community workshops that will be open to the public to attend in person. The pack will include guides to running a session, power point presentation, questions for stakeholders and feedback template. We will also run drop-in sessions in advance for session facilitators.

Operational oversight from MSD will ensure breadth of representation across New Zealand and logistical support for the sessions will be provided by the Carers Alliance to their members and MSD to other groups.

Community organisations will promote the sessions with their members and broader local stakeholders, and they will host the sessions, providing venues and refreshments.

Notes from the sessions will be provided back to MSD.

### Targeted workshops

MSD will run targeted workshops with representatives from key stakeholder groups via online sessions (or in person in Wellington). Participants will include organisations, peak bodies, providers, advocacy groups and professionals working across the care sector and encompassing carers, support staff etc. This will provide the opportunity to structure the sessions to issues specific to certain cohorts.

We will collaborate with relevant agencies and organisations to, where possible, utilise existing fora for representative groups.

### Public online workshops

Public online sessions will allow us to meet the needs of carers who cannot attend in person or prefer to engage online. These forums will be held at various times of day, including in the evening to allow those who have work/school commitments to attend.

Numbers will be restricted to 30 at each online forum. MSD will manage registrations and run each session.

## Timeline

The importance of the topic to the community and the complexity of the issues necessitates a minimum six-week engagement period. Consultation will formally begin on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025, with workshops starting the following week, and will close on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

The draft Action Plan is expected to be available the week of 17<sup>th</sup> November, but this date is subject to change. The closing date for consultation has factored in the optimal date for the launch of the Action Plan, given 2026 is an election year, Budget in May and the Cabinet approval process for launch.

Recognising that the consultations will occur over the summer holiday and individuals' availability will be limited for much of December and January, consultations will be divided into three parts to maximise engagement opportunities:

1. Part One will commence from November 24<sup>th</sup> to December 12<sup>th</sup> (3 weeks), consisting of targeted workshops starting a week after the release of the draft Action Plan to allow stakeholders time to prepare their feedback in advance of the meeting).
2. Part Two will take place throughout the duration of the consultation period, and it comprises the online portion of the consultation. Specifically, organisations, carers, and individuals will be able to respond to an online survey or provide submissions via dedicated website.
3. Targeted workshops will recommence during Part Three, which will occur from late January and extend until the end of February.

November 17th Consultation opens	November	December	January	February	February 12th 2026 Consultation closes
	Submissions received - email and post				
	Survey				
			12 Dec - 23 Jan No eworkshops		
	Workshops 24 Nov - 12 Dec			Workshops 26 Jan - 12 Feb	

## Consultation materials

The draft Action Plan – Narrative will form the key engagement document. We will also produce a summary version which will be used to produce alternate formats.

Key questions and a power point presentation will be used for the workshops.

A Facilitation Pack will be produced to support community workshops. This will include a guide to running the session, power point presentation, questions for stakeholders and feedback template.

## Consultation analysis and follow-up

We expect to receive high volumes of community feedback and input. Evaluation of feedback through the various engagement channels will be combined, analysed for themes and compiled in a summary of consultation. The Consultation Summary will be provided to the Minister and used to inform the policy development of the final Carers' Strategy Action Plan.

The Consultation Summary will be published along with the final Action Plan and both will be provided to stakeholders who participated in engagement, recognising that engagement is not a one-way-process and we must respect and acknowledge the time and effort that stakeholders invest into the process.

## Communications

A communications plan will be developed to promote and support delivery of the consultation with simple and consistent content and key messages. This will include content for:

- MSD website – Consultation materials, link to survey, draft Action Plan and summary, submissions guide, facilitation pack for community workshops, list of online sessions, and list of community sessions.
- Agencies, Carers Alliance, partners, providers and community organisations who can reach different population groups, etc. We will provide messages and content that they can share with their audiences, including promotion of submissions, surveys and workshops, through their established channels including social media, newsletters, web etc.
- Social media channels – to promote the consultation process for the draft Action Plan as well as Regional Workshops.

If budget allows, we will also promote through appropriate media channels to target our population groups, for example Iwi and Pacific radio/media.



## Stakeholders

The following outlines the stakeholder groups, incorporating our key population groups and the method of engagement for each group. We will work with other agencies and partners to build a full stakeholder list for this consultation.

Stakeholder Groups	Example groups (not comprehensive)
Agency Reference Groups	MSD Māori Reference Group, MSD Pacific Reference Group
Advocacy Groups/Peak Bodies	NBACG, Carers NZ, HCHA, NZDSN, Platform (mental health peak body)
MSD Iwi Partners	Te Hiku, Waikato Tainui, Tūhoe
Māori carers	Te Ao Marama o Aotearoa, Kāpō Māori, Tu Tangata Turi O Aotearoa, Te Roopu Waiora Trust
Pacific carers	Mana Pasifika, Faiva Ora Leadership Group, Pacific Autism Support Group (PASG), Vaka Tatua
Older carers and carers of older people	Aged Care Association, Older Peoples' Disabled Group, Citizens NZ, Age Concern, Grey Power
Young carers	ILead, Young Carers NZ, Carers Alliance NGO leadership cluster for young carers
Families/whanau of disabled people	DPOs, People First, Parent/Whanau Network (Whaikaha), EGL National Leadership Group
Rural carers	Rural Women, Grey Power (which has a large rural network)
Carers Alliance	The coalition of 61 NGOs
Professionals and Practitioners	GPs, NASCA
People receiving care	Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) Coalition