

Caring for the Carers: He Atawhai I te Hunga Ngākau Oha o Aotearoa

Discussion document on the proposed actions to support the Carer's Strategy Action Plan 2019 - 2023

Ministers' Foreword

Carers are an essential and valuable part of Aotearoa. They contribute to our countries economic sustainability, as well as playing a major role in improving individual wellbeing and community cohesion.

This Government is committed to supporting everyone who is able to be earning, learning, caring or volunteering. The Carers Strategy Action Plan is an important part of this, and provides a framework to support people who are caring for a person who has a disability, illness, injury or health condition and needs additional assistance with their everyday living.

This year the Action Plan will be underpinned by a wellbeing approach that is focused on opportunities and substantiality for those who have caring responsibilities.

This year's Action Plan will continue to contribute to the vision and direction of the Carers Strategy. This strategy was introduced in 2007 to improve the choices for and quality of life of carers and those close to them. The release of the Carers' Strategy was a first step in recognising, valuing and supporting the people, families and whānau who care for someone with a disability, health condition, illness or injury.

Since 2007, there have been two Action Plans that have contributed to achieving the vision of the Carers' Strategy. We have accomplished a lot over the past 12 years to support people to undertake a care role. In particular, that carers are becoming more recognised for the important mahi they do.

While a lot has been achieved, we know there is more we can do. Our goal has been to develop a more ambitious Action Plan, which focuses on supporting carers to do what they do best.

Since the beginning of the Carers' Strategy we have worked in partnership with the Carers Alliance to ensure that the Action Plan reflects the views of carers. This partnership has been a great example of what we can achieve when we work together. We are also building partnerships with Iwi Social Services and Māori providers to ensure Māori carers' voices are reflected in our work. We now invite all New Zealanders to be involved, so that Aotearoa is a place where carers are valued and supported.

We want to make sure that we get this Action Plan right. To do that, we need your help. We want to hear from carers, the people they care for, and the organisations who support carers. Your input will help us to create an Action Plan that works for you, your family and whānau, and your community.

Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Social Development

Introduction

We want to hear from you to make sure we are supporting New Zealand carers

It is important that the next Carers' Strategy Action Plan reflects what is most important to carers, and that we focus our efforts on actions that will make a meaningful difference to the lives of our carers. In order to do this, we need your feedback. We want to hear from carers, as well as the people they care for and the organisations that support carers, to make sure we have got this right.

This discussion document outlines a draft Action Plan. Each action area includes questions to prompt your thinking about the actions, and space for you to write your thoughts. The 'Have your say' section at the end of the document outlines the different ways that you can be involved.

In addition to seeking your feedback on the proposed actions, we are also interested to explore what the term 'carer' means to you, your whānau and wider community groups. We will be looking to better define what the name of this new Action Plan should be called, and how we should be referring to people who provide this crucial support to their friends, family and whānau.

The Carers' Strategy and Action Plan is for all carers

The Government's Carers' Strategy and Action Plan is for anyone who cares for a friend, family or whānau member with a health condition, illness, injury or disability who needs help with everyday living.

The term 'carer' might not work for everyone. Words like 'supporter' or 'manaakitanga' might better describe what you do, or you might see caring as a natural part of what you do for the people you love. Carer is the term used to describe the diversity of individuals, families and whānau who provide this support.

You can find out more about the previous Action Plans by visiting www.msd.govt.nz

One in ten New Zealanders provide care

There are over 430,000 carers in New Zealand. That is one in ten New Zealanders. Of these, two thirds are women, and at least 40,000 are young carers.

More people will need to provide care as our population ages

With the number of New Zealanders needing support expected to grow significantly, especially as our population ages, there will be greater demand for people to take on caring roles. We also know that most people would prefer to be cared for in their own homes and communities rather than in residential or institutional settings.

We want to support people to take on the caring role, where this is what the carer chooses to do, and where this is desired by the person who needs care as well as family and whānau. This helps us to ensure that the care role is sustainable and that whānau and communities can live in the ways that work best for them.

An Action Plan that recognises, values and supports carers is an investment in New Zealand's future

As more people take on caring roles it is important that we are investing in support for carers. While the interests of carers and the people they care for are closely related, support is usually focused on the person needing care.

The demands of care often means that carers have fewer opportunities than people without caring responsibilities to participate in education, paid work, and social and community activities. Over time this can have a negative impact on carer wellbeing, and their ability to continue to provide care in the medium to long term. It can also have wider impacts on a carer and their family's finances and social connectedness.

Increasing support for carers means placing greater emphasis on carers' wellbeing, and enables us to help in developing strong and healthy families, whānau and communities.

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The new Action Plan responds to what carers say is most important to them

In October last year, we undertook targeted engagement workshops and an online survey to better understand the impacts of caring, and to hear people's ideas about what we could do to better support carers. We also learned a lot from the existing evidence about carers' experiences and through consulting on the previous two Action Plans. This Action Plan aims to respond to what we have learned by focusing action on what is most important to carers.

Caring can be rewarding, but it also has challenges

We know that caring can be a really positive and rewarding experience. Carers have told us that providing care can bring them closer to loved ones and bring a new sense of purpose and identity.

However, we also know that caring can be hard sometimes. Some of the challenges we heard about include:

- it is hard to access supports and services – information could be more centralised
- services are not always culturally appropriate
- I have to keep re-telling my story to different people
- I am struggling to manage the financial costs of care
- I feel overwhelmed and at the end of my tether – I need a break
- I am unable to pursue my own interests – such as travel, work or study
- I have my own health concerns, and worry what will happen to the person I care for if something happens to me.

It is important to us that our efforts are focused on addressing these challenges, so that carers are able to take a break, look after their own health needs and spend time with their friends and family. In turn, this helps to support the wellbeing of the wider family, whānau and community.

Some groups of carers face additional challenges

During targeted engagement we heard that caring can have varying impacts on carers, particularly those who identify with a different culture, age or gender than the mainstream.

For many carers, the impacts of care include social isolation, difficulties balancing work and caring, and even lacking support because they do not identify as a carer. These may be felt differently across the carer population. Some carer groups face additional challenges, including:

- not wanting to ask for help, due to perceived shame and stigma
- services not respecting cultural norms
- difficulties balancing school and caring

While the Carers' Strategy and Action Plan is for all carers, this Action Plan proposes an additional focus on four target population groups; **Māori, Pacific, younger and older** carers. There is some overlap between the carers in these groups.

Caring also impacts women more; two out of three carers are women. Women in different carer population groups may face additional challenges.

There is also a lack of information about groups of carers who may not identify as such and see caring as a natural role or their duty as family. This may mean carers are not accessing support (such as carer payments, or information to help them with the care role), which in turn could have an avoidable negative impact on their lives.

Māori carers

Māori women are more likely to be a carer than women in other population groups, and are also typically younger than other carers. Māori communities have higher rates and levels of co-morbidity of long term health conditions and related health issues, with carers more likely to be managing their own health condition as well as their care role. Māori can have cultural understandings of care that means that they may not see themselves as a carer, as this role is identified as whānau responsibility. This can influence whether, or how they access support.

Pacific carers

Pacific carers are often younger than the general carer population. Pacific carers can have different cultural understandings of care, with spirituality and faith factoring in this. People who work with Pacific carers have told us that they may not see themselves as a carer, and negative experiences with services may mean they feel reluctant to engage further. Pacific communities tend to have poorer health than the general population, with carers having to deal with their own health conditions, thereby increasing the need for care and support.

Younger carers

Younger carers also often do not think of themselves as carers. They may not want to draw attention to themselves, as they may believe there will be negative perceptions of their role, or that this will have ramifications for their wider family. This group can include very young children looking after family and whānau, including children of primary and secondary school age who are undertaking significant care responsibilities.

Older carers

Older carers may experience social isolation as they are not able to go out as much because of demands from looking after a partner's health conditions, or in managing their own health conditions and requiring support themselves.

We are working with agencies to ensure tailored responses to carer groups

We have proposed some specific actions where we will work with agencies and organisations to ensure there is a tailored response for specific population groups. This includes ensuring that these groups are accessing services at similar rates to the general carer population.

Ensuring a Te Ao Māori perspective through our work

In keeping with our Crown obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our commitment to better recognising te ao Māori, we have used the Whānau Rangatiratanga Framework¹ to help guide how we prioritise actions for whānau carers. We are also using the Whānau Ora Outcomes Framework to ensure we recognise the principles that are important to whānau carers. Agencies will use a whānau centred approach as an underlying principle in the implementation of the Action Plan.

We will be working with organisations that represent Māori carers, including Iwi Social Services and a number of Māori providers who work with Māori whānau. This includes the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agencies, who work with a range of families across New Zealand.

Supporting Pacific carers

There is a strong focus on our Pacific carers in this Action Plan. To ensure that work to develop the Action Plan represents Pacific carers' voices, from engagement through to how we measure outcomes for Pacific peoples, we will be guided by the Lalanga Fou and Kapasa frameworks and tools. These will help us bring to life Pacific peoples' values, knowledge, and experiences through the engagement process and for future actions relating to Pacific carers.

This Action Plan links to other Strategies and Action Plans

This Action Plan links to, and complements, a number of other strategies and cross-government work, including:

- Government response to review of Whānau Ora Review: Tipu Matoro ki Te Ao and the Whānau Ora Outcomes Framework (Te Puni Kōkiri)
- Better Later Life Strategy – He Oranga Kaumātua 2019-2034 (Office for Seniors)
- Healthy Ageing Strategy 2016 (Ministry of Health)
- New Zealand Disability Strategy (Office for Disability Issues)
- Transforming Respite: Disability Support Services Respite Strategy 2017 - 2022 (Ministry of Health)
- He Korowai Oranga – Māori Health Strategy (2002) (Ministry of Health)
- 'Ala Mo'ui: Pathways to Pacific Health and Wellbeing 2014 – 2018 (Ministry of Health)
- New Zealand Framework for Dementia Care 2013 (Ministry of Health)
- Health and Disability System Review

¹ The Whānau Rangatiratanga Framework has been used in the annual Family and Whānau Status Reports and as a tool to evaluate the Ministry of Social Development's E Tū Whānau programme.

- Government's response to He Ara Oranga, Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction
- The overhaul of the welfare system (Ministry of Social Development)
- The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet)
- Work on a new approach to employer assisted work visas and regional workforce planning (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment)
- The Lalanga Fou Report (Ministry for Pacific Peoples) (particularly Goal 3 and sub-goal 2).

Work to improve the lives of older people, disabled people, people with mental health conditions, and to improve the health outcomes of Māori and Pacific, will improve the situation for carers. This includes improving outcomes for those caring for people in the above categories, as well as some carers themselves being older people, disabled people, Māori carers and Pacific carers. We are working closely with the teams leading these pieces of work to ensure we are well-aligned.

Actions have been organised under four key areas, reflecting a carer's journey

We have concentrated actions in four areas, to reflect some carers' journeys; recognising, navigating, supporting and balancing. This will not reflect all carers' journeys, because we know that for some caring might be quite sudden, for some it will be irregular, and for others there will be a slow increase in the care provided. This is just one way for us to organise the Action Plan, and is something that we welcome feedback on.

Recognition

Recognising carers and their contributions

New Zealand's carers do not often get recognised for the important work that they do. This can make it hard for carers, because their role might not always be acknowledged by health professionals, by their employers or by their teachers. Sometimes it means that they are not included in conversations about the care of the person they are supporting. It can also mean they don't get access to financial or non-financial services and supports they are eligible for, or that they are balancing lots of commitments without case managers, health professionals, employers and teachers understanding the demands of caring. At other times it can mean that they feel undervalued.

It can be hard for agencies to target actions to carers when we have little information about who or where they are. We know that our current statistics do not capture everyone, particularly young carers who are under the age of 15. It is important that we understand who our carers are, so that we know more about when and how to help.

During targeted engagement, carers told us that:

"Caregiving can be perceived by others as "not a real job". I want to be valued by having my role recognised as real work..."

"I think caregivers are very forgotten people."

Action 1: Exploring mechanisms, including legislation, to better recognise carers and their particular needs

Lead Agency: Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies: Carers Alliance

Work to begin: Year 1 (2019)

Work will be undertaken to identify ways carers can be better recognised, identified and supported through mechanisms such as legislation review, or through policy levers.

Action 2: Develop a national campaign to raise awareness of carers, including a National Carers Day

Lead Agency: Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies: Carers Alliance

Work to begin: Year 3 (2021)

Sustained promotion of the value and contribution of carers and their caring role by the Government will help bolster awareness and more positive attitudes towards carers across the community. This action proposes exploring the idea of a National Carers Day, alongside a social media campaign, to increase awareness of who carers are and what they do. Our aim is for carers to feel they are valued by their community and that their caring role is recognised by the Government.

Action 3: Better understand the needs of carers, particularly younger, older, Māori, and Pacific carers, as well as other hidden carers by creating a carer research fund

Lead Agency: Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies: Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry for Youth Development, Ministry for Women, Statistics New Zealand, Ministry of Education, Office for Seniors and the Carers Alliance

Work to begin: Year 1 (2019)

There is limited research on the varying experiences of carers who are Māori, Pacific, younger or older. 'Hidden carers', who do not identify with the term 'carer' and therefore do not access supports, often come from these subpopulations.

Decision-makers in government and the community need to better understand how services and supports may not be reaching these carers. While we can use our current limited insights to better tailor our services, there are also opportunities to commission

new research on carers that takes into account the changing priorities and demographics of New Zealanders. This includes ensuring a kaupapa Māori approach in commissioning new research.

This action will also include looking into key barriers and impacts of current care leave entitlements for carers who work.

Action 4: Improve information about carers through modifying existing data collection tools

Lead Agencies: Carers Alliance, Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies: Ministry of Health, Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry for Women, Stats NZ Ministry of Education, the Office for Seniors, Tertiary Education Commission, and the Ministry for Youth Development

Work to begin: Year 1 – 3 (2019 – 2021)

Current data collection tools provide us with a good overview of carers in New Zealand. For example, Census data provides a picture of the overall number of carers, including by gender and ethnicity.

We want to have a better understanding of how caring has changed over time, and build on only anecdotal evidence about carers under the age of 15. This action aims to build a robust and accurate supply of information on carers, which can inform how services and supports are provided to carers. Modifications could be made to the Census, the General Social Survey or the Health Survey to tell us more about carers.

This action will also include supporting work to identify young carers through a survey tool in a New Zealand context (Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities).

Action 5: Better support to include the voices of young carers in policy development, including through re-establishing a Young Carers Advisory Board

Lead Agency: Carers Alliance

Other Agencies: Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, and Te Puni Kōkiri

Work to begin: Year 2 (2020)

The voices of children and young people are important, and will inform how the Government can better support those in a care role, as well as their family and whānau. The action of re-establishing a Young Carers Advisory Board will help to ensure young carers are well represented through a nomination process. In addition, nominations will be encouraged through the Rangatahi Leadership Group at Te Puni Kōkiri.

What do you think?

- Overall, what do you think of the actions in this section of the draft Action Plan?
- Would you like anything in this section to be changed or improved?
- Is there anything else that you think might be more important than these actions to help identify and recognise carers?

Feel free to take notes and write your thoughts below.

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Navigation

Ensuring carers receive supports and services

Services can be complex to navigate and create difficulties for family and whānau. The main carer supports are provided through the welfare system, the health system and the accident compensation system. It can be hard to know where to go to find out which services are available, and who can access them. Actions in this area aim to increase carers' knowledge about and access to supports, so that carers are better able to navigate the system and receive services they are entitled to. This includes increasing carer awareness about formal services that allow them to take a break from the care role, as well as ensuring those services meet their needs.

During targeted engagement, carers told us that:

"It has been a struggle to find our way through the system..."

"There are a lot of people needing information and not knowing where to go to get it."

"The biggest thing for me has been that no one tells you what's available or who to ask for help or advice."

Action 6: Working with carers, people receiving care and relevant sectors and agencies to explore the benefit of a national approach to managing continence

Lead Agency: Ministry of Health

Other Agencies: Carers Alliance and District Health Boards

Work to begin: TBC

Incontinence (bladder and bowel) is a common health problem and is both an under-reported and growing issue, particularly within New Zealand's ageing population. Managing continence is a priority concern for the many people who experience difficulties with it, as well as for their carers.

Apart from the stress and stigma that are often associated with incontinence, the costs of incontinence are a significant burden to people, the health system, and society as a whole. This includes productivity impacts (eg, time off or not being able to work), the cost of products, formal care, and environmental effects (ie, disposal). Access to continence services and equity of outcomes varies between population groups.

An intersectoral approach may be needed to identify priorities for this action. The report on continence commissioned by the Carers Alliance² will help inform work on this action.

Action 7: Strengthen navigation across all parts of the care and support system (including health, welfare and ACC) to ensure carers are aware of, and supported to access, available assistance.

² Understanding continence in New Zealand: A report for the New Zealand Carers Alliance, December 2018

Lead Agencies: Ministry of Health, Accident Compensation Corporation, and the Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies: District Health Boards, and Te Puni Kōkiri

Work to begin: TBC

Finding your way around services and supports in health, welfare, ACC and other areas can be very complicated. Many roles have navigator or connector functions as a key part of their responsibilities to help people. Each sector and organisation is focused on providing their own services as effectively as possible to assist, refer, redirect and introduce people to other parts of their services as required. However, this practice should be more effective **between** organisations and sectors as many people have to deal with multiple agencies at the same time.

Action 8: Improving engagement between people needing care, their carers, and supporting agencies, including Whānau Ora Commissioning agencies and providers by making information and resources more accessible

Lead Agencies: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, and the Accident Compensation Corporation

Other Agencies: Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry of Health, Carers Alliance, and the Tertiary Education Commission

Work to begin: TBC

Carers can feel left out of discussions about the people they care for and be tired of having to repeat information to different people and services. This can be frustrating and mean lost opportunities for timely use of services and supports. Involving carers in a person's needs assessment, care planning and delivery is an important part of the care process.

Accessible information is relevant across health, welfare and ACC sectors and services. In the health sector, the Ministry of Health is working on improvements in information sharing through the National Health Information Platform (NHIP). These improvements will improve access to information by people, their carers, health and disability providers, and other supporting agencies. Appropriate information on the importance of the consent process, including supported decision-making and Enduring Power of Attorney, needs to be available and positively addressed.

In addition, professionals who work with carers do not always have sufficient information about the care role, and the other services available to carers. This includes Primary Health Organisations, programme and services in schools, Whānau Ora Commissioning Agencies and providers, educators, and Work and Income case managers. This action involves identifying the key touch points for carers (for example GP visits) and developing resources and training for relevant professionals. This action aims to enable professionals to recognise people who are in a caring role, and respond appropriately to their carer related needs.

This action also seeks to connect government services with community groups that have a more direct role in supporting individuals and families, to help them identify carers in their community and connect them to services and support where needed. For example, we want to connect with iwi so we can better support whānau carers who are not engaging in services and may want some extra help.

This work will also align with the Accessibility Action programme that the Ministry of Social Development is leading.

Action 9: Identifying whānau centred tools and initiatives that provide culturally responsive approaches for Māori carers and their whānau

Lead Agency: Te Puni Kōkiri

Other Agencies: Ministry for Social Development, Ministry for Social Development, Accident Compensation Corporation, Whānau Ora Commissioning agencies

Work to begin: Year 2 (2020)

Māori carers are one of our target population groups, with the care role often having a significant impact on their quality of life. Māori women are more likely to be a carer than women in other population groups, and are also typically younger than other carers. Māori communities have higher rates and levels of co-morbidity of long term health conditions and related health issues, with carers more likely to be managing their own health condition as well as their care role. Māori can have cultural understandings of care that means that they may not see themselves as a carer, as this role is often identified as whānau responsibility. This can influence whether, or how they access support.

This action will look at culturally appropriate ways for family and whānau carers to be supported in their care role and access suitable services and supports across the health, welfare and ACC systems, as well as at a community level.

Action 10: Improve the quality, accessibility and equity of services across New Zealand for carers to be able to take a break (including the Flexible Disability Respite Budgets – I Choose)

Lead Agency: Ministry of Health, District Health Boards, Accident Compensation Corporation

Other Agencies: N/A

Work to begin: TBC

This action will address the difficulty carers and their friends, family and whānau have in accessing ways to take a break that meets their needs. This means making sure it is affordable, easily available, high quality, generally and culturally appropriate.

Taking a break is important for carers' health and wellbeing, and in particular could help address issues of social isolation and loneliness in carers.

What do you think?

- Overall, what do you think of the actions in this section of the draft Action Plan?
- Would you like anything in this section to be changed or improved?
- Is there anything else that you think might be more important than these actions to help carers navigate services?

Feel free to take notes and write your thoughts below.

Supporting

Caring for carers – supporting wellbeing and building skills

New Zealand's carers take on a lot when they decide to care for a friend, family or whānau member. Sometimes the care role can be very intense, and carers need some time away to relax and recharge. Other times the care role can last for a very long time, impacting the carers ability to work. In these cases, carers might need financial support. This section focuses on the supports that government offers to carers. Actions aim to increase the level of support, or introduce new supports, so that carers are able to access information and training about the care role, access financial supports, and experience improved health and wellbeing.

During targeted engagement, carers told us that:

"We live in poverty and I have no hope of bettering our situation."

"I think the carer's benefit needs to be reviewed, especially when all other costs have increased."

"I am constantly tired."

Action 11: Helping carers to access relevant information about the care role through improved language, formats, and accessible tools

Lead Agency: Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Carers Alliance

Other Agencies: Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry of Pacific Peoples, Office for Ethnic Communities, Accident Compensation Corporation, Office for Disability Issues, and the Office for Seniors

Work to begin: Year 2-3 (2020 or 2021)

Carers can sometimes find themselves unexpectedly in the care role without much introduction, and may lack the knowledge or confidence to undertake care tasks. This action builds on previous Action Plans by helping carers find learning opportunities that are relevant to their needs, and expanding carer learning where gaps are identified. We will continue to provide carers with choice around how they learn, with opportunities for self-directed learning (for example through online reading), as well as face-to-face interactions (such as webinars and workshops).

While we want carers to feel confident in undertaking care tasks, we also want this action to help carers to feel safe, healthy, and empowered to make choices for themselves and as a family.

Carers have told us that information can be confusing and difficult to access, or does not address their needs. This action will ensure that information provision is accessible, relevant and simple for carers who are trying to find out more about the care role, and what services they are eligible for. It is important that information is provided in a range of languages, and that the information is culturally appropriate.

This action includes enhancing online care planning tools – with a te ao Māori perspective.

Action 12: Update the resource A Guide for Carers to ensure it is relevant for the different carer groups

<https://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/carers/>

Lead Agency: Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies: Ministry of Health, and the Carers Alliance

Work to begin: Year 1 (2019)

The Guide is practical help for people supporting friends, family and whānau who need help with everyday living because of a health condition, disability or injury. It includes information on a range of services and supports, including financial and non-financial help, health and wellbeing, taking a break.

This action involves updating the current *Guide for Carers* to ensure that information is relevant, accurate and up-to-date.

Action 13: Development of pathways within schools to support young carers and their family and whānau to access the support they need

Lead Agencies: Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children

Other Agencies: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, and Te Puni Kōkiri,

Work to begin: Year 2 (2020)

There is limited information on young carers. This action will help to identify young carers within schools, understand where there are gaps in services and supports for young carers and look to address these through existing programmes of services in schools (one channel could be through Social Workers in Schools programme).

Action 14: Develop and implement initiatives to preserve and grow social networks, supports and connections for older carers and carers of older people

Lead Agencies: Coalition to End Loneliness, and the Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies: Office for Seniors, Ministry of Health, and Te Puni Kōkiri

Work to begin: Year 2 (2020)

Develop and implement initiatives to preserve and grow social networks, supports and connections for older carers and carers for older people. This work aligns with the outcome areas in the Better Later Life Strategy – He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 – 2034.

Action 15: Responding to the Mental Health and Addiction Inquiry recommendations for families and whānau carers of people requiring mental health and addiction support

Lead Agency: Ministry of Health

Other Agencies: Ministry of Social Development, and Te Puni Kōkiri,

Work to begin: TBC

He Ara Oranga, Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction has three recommendations for families and whānau carers of people requiring mental health and addiction support:

- guidance on sharing information and partnering with families and whānau
- integration of guidance in workforce training, contracts, standards, guidelines, and accountability arrangements
- review support to families and whānau and propose supports to enhance access, affordability and options.

Action 16: Funded Family Care policy change

Lead Agency: Ministry of Health

Other Agencies: District Health Boards

Work to begin: TBC

Funded Family Care (FFC) policies allow eligible disabled people to choose to have their resident family member provide the support services otherwise provided by a state funded care and support worker. The Ministry of Health Disability Support Services and District Health Boards have FFC policies. In September 2018, the Government announced the intention to change FFC to make it fairer for family carers and those being cared for. This included the intention to repeal Part 4A of the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000. Engagement on FFC included eligibility and pay rates for carers and supports the need for change. The Ministry of Health is providing advice to Ministers on options for change.

Action 17: Review policy settings for financial supports for carers

Lead Agencies: Accident Compensation Corporation, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies:

Work to begin: TBC

The review would include policy settings in the medium to long-term, to ensure a coherent set of financial supports for carers. These include:

- the Accident Compensation Corporation's attendant care policy including natural supports consideration
- The Ministry of Health's Disability Support Services Individualised Funding
- Funded Family Care policies
- Supported Living Payment Carer (note that the Welfare Expert Advisory Group's recommendations).

The objective is for payments to carers to be simple to find out about, easy to access, and that payments provide an adequate level of income.

Action 18: Consider a carer payment and / or other types of improved financial support for carer wellbeing

Lead Agency: Ministry of Social Development

Other Agencies: Ministry of Health, and the Carers Alliance

Work to begin: TBC

While carers are currently able to get payments for caring, these payments are not expressly targeted at improving carer wellbeing. The potential Carer Payment could be similar to Australia's Carer Supplement, which is paid yearly. Carers could choose how to spend it, for example taking a break or buying a gym membership.

What do you think?

- Overall, what do you think of the actions in this section of the draft Action Plan?
- Would you like anything in this section to be changed or improved?
- Is there anything else that you think might be more important than these actions to support carers in their care role?

Feel free to take notes and write your thoughts below.

Balancing

Supporting paid work, study and other opportunities

Many carers need or want to remain in work while providing care. Others would like the opportunity to study. However, managing these commitments with the care role can be challenging. Sometimes the challenge is managing the time commitments. Other times it can be organising someone else to provide care, or the attitudes of employers or teachers. Actions aim to better support those carers, who want to manage paid employment and/or study with caring, to be able to do that. It is also important to recognise caring as a potential employment outcome and support carers to follow this pathway if desired.

During targeted engagement, carers told us that:

"I am struggling to attend work for the required time and using all leave available to attend medical appointments for the person I care for. Having to take leave without pay is also affecting the family."

"I can't commit to anything. I never know day to day if she will manage to make it to school. If she does make it, I am on alert to rush and pick her up...."

Action 19: Launch the Carers New Zealand CareWise initiative, including work to expand promotion of flexible working arrangements

Lead Agency: Carers Alliance

Other Agencies: Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, New Zealand Qualifications Authority (to be consulted), and the Ministry for Women

Work to begin: Year 1 (2019)

This action includes reviewing human resource policies and procedures so carers are identified and recognised in workplaces. This initiative includes expanding on existing work to promote flexible working. We know that many carers want to undertake other activities alongside their caring role, but sometimes their employers or teachers may not understand. This can force them to make some difficult decisions. Supporting employers to have carer-friendly policies, including communication, skill transition, and promotion of flexible working conditions for carers, will enable carers to manage their care role with employment, education or other training. In turn, we expect this to improve carer wellbeing.

This action aligns with work underway in the disability sector to improve employment outcomes for disabled people, including development of guidelines on reasonable accommodation which would include carers.

Action 20: Developing carer skills and learning through enabling access to formal training programmes that credit care experience and lead into further training or employment opportunities

Lead Agency: Ministry of Social Development and the Carers Alliance

Other Agencies: Ministry of Business and Employment (Immigration), Ministry of Health, and the Tertiary Education Commission

Work to begin: TBC

Work in this area also supports the key area of *recognition*. This will help raise awareness and recognition of the skills and capabilities carers apply and develop in providing care to people.

This action includes exploring how access to alternative types of learning which carers could undertake while caring that is affordable and manageable, could be supported. This includes working with Tertiary Education Organisations to develop learning modules (microcredentials).

These modules (stand-alone education products) may be related to specific care skills, but could also seek to credentialise skills which are broadly relevant to the workplace. This creates an opportunity to improve and future-proof the employability of carers and support productivity of the workforce.

What do you think?

- Overall, what do you think of the actions in this section of the draft Action Plan?
- Would you like anything in this section to be changed or improved?
- Is there anything else that you think might be more important than these actions to help carers balance caring with other responsibilities?

Feel free to take notes and write your thoughts below.

Have your say

There are a number of ways to put your views to us:

- by sending us a written submission
- by attending a workshop.

The closing date for submissions is X.

Send us your submission

- Send us your submission at carers.strategy@msd.govt.nz.
- Alternatively, you could mail your submission to us at X.

Attend a workshop

- We are holding X workshops across the country. These are being held in A, B and C locations.
- If you would like to attend a workshop, please send us an email at carers.strategy@msd.govt.nz.

Publishing submissions

We will publish a summary of your submission on the Ministry of Social Development website, unless you request we do not.

- Submissions from individuals will be anonymous – we will remove any personal details or information that identifies you.
- You may also ask for your details to be withheld if your submission is requested under the Official Information Act.

Consultation closing date

The closing date for submissions is X.

Naming the Strategy

We want to ensure that the name we give to this Strategy reflects our current and future family support structures, and supports how you feel about your care role.

We are seeking your views on our proposed actions for the new Carers' Strategy Action Plan, but also your thoughts on what the current name means to you. We welcome any thoughts you have on the best name for the new strategy.

We want this strategy to be inclusive of all our cultures, ethnicities and ages, and to support all carers in New Zealand.

You may also have a different way of describing the work you do to support others. We are interested to hear if the term 'carer' defines what you do or if there is another term you would like us to use in the Action Plan.

We invite you to submit your feedback on a name for the strategy at the same time as providing any feedback you have on our proposed actions.