

# A Guide for Carers

He Aratohu mā ngā Kaitiaki

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Practical help for people supporting family or friends who are older and need assistance, or who have a health condition, a disability, an injury or mental health, alcohol and drug issues.



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# Foreword

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Welcome to the latest update of New Zealand's *A Guide for Carers* – a practical and accessible resource designed to help you as a carer to help yourself. Carers make a vital contribution to our society, giving up time to help other people live with dignity.

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I want to thank carers personally for your commitment to looking after someone who could not manage alone.

It is also important that you can look after yourself. Carers deserve to have choices and opportunities to take part in family activities, social life, employment and education. The 2016 edition of *A Guide for Carers – He Aratohu mā ngā Kaitiaki* provides information on the range of support to give you those choices – including financial help, respite care, help at home, transport and travel.

We've developed some useful and practical resources for carers, including *Time Out*, a guide to planning breaks to make sure you look after your own wellbeing, and *Supporting people to move at home*, which is focused on safety.

Services like MyCare can help to find a suitable relief carer to take over responsibilities while you take a break and recharge, and we're committed to working with the Carers' Alliance to keep the New Zealand Carers' Strategy moving forward with new ideas and the resources you need.

This guide helps progress the Strategy launched in 2008. Developed in consultation with carers across the country, including the Carers' Alliance, it's all about making sure you get the right support and are recognised for the invaluable contribution you make to people's lives.

Since *A Guide for Carers* was first published in 2009, it's been updated regularly to ensure it remains relevant and accurate, and I'm told it's a very useful, accessible source of information on services and support carers need.

On behalf of the Government, thank you for your valuable and much appreciated contribution and commitment to the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maggie Barry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

**Honourable Maggie Barry ONZM**  
Minister for Seniors

# Are you a carer?

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Do you often assist a family, whānau or aiga member or friend with everyday activities?

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You may not see yourself as a “carer” – perhaps it’s just a part of who and what you do. You could be a parent of a disabled child, an older person caring for a sick partner, or a younger person supporting a friend with a mental health condition.

The care you give could be needed suddenly due to injury or illness, or gradually over time as you provide

more support for, say, a parent or grandparent who needs assistance.

At some stage in our lives, most of us will care for, or be supported by, someone. If this sounds like you, then chances are there are services and support on hand to help. Whether you’re new to caring or have supported someone for many years, this guide will show you what help is available.



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# Money

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In this section, you'll find information about financial help from Work and Income, Inland Revenue, ACC and other agencies.

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# Financial help

This table lists different types of financial help that may be available.

Need	Financial help	Who to contact	See page
Income support for carers	Supported Living Payment	Work and Income	8
	Caring for someone with an injury	ACC	41
Income support for the person cared for	New Zealand Superannuation Veteran's Pension	Senior Services	9
	Supported Living Payment Jobseeker Support	Work and Income	9
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Work and Income provides financial support for people in need. With its help, you or the person you support can move towards a more independent lifestyle and become more active in your community. Work and Income can help you plan for and move into training or paid work when you're ready.

It's important to stay in contact about any changes that might affect your payments, say, if you start paid work or your family situation changes. This will help Work and Income make sure you're getting the right amount of money and you don't miss out on any extra help.

## Financial help

There are different types of financial help available, depending on your situation. Talk to Work and Income, or Senior Services if you're 65 and over, to find out what types of support you may be able to receive. Inland Revenue (or, in some cases, a doctor or other registered health practitioner) may also be able to help. This section describes some types of support that may be available.

## How to get financial help

- You'll find information about help available from Work and Income at **workandincome.govt.nz**. You or the person you support can check what you might get and apply online for New Zealand Superannuation and other benefits. You can make an appointment online, see current benefit rates and income limits, and update some of your own details.
- You can also call Work and Income on **0800 559 009**. **See page 59** for how to speak to Work and Income in one of ten other languages.
- For more information on financial help for people who are 65 and over, visit **seniors.msd.govt.nz** or call Senior Services on **0800 552 002**.
- For more information about help from Inland Revenue, including Working for Families assistance, go to **ird.govt.nz** or call Inland Revenue on **0800 227 773**. **See page 55** for other ways to get in touch with Inland Revenue.
- ACC may help with weekly payments for loss of earnings for people unable to work because of an injury, or provide a payment to you if you're providing care for longer than one would naturally provide for a family member following an injury. This may affect the financial help available from Work and Income. Read more about help available from ACC on **page 41**.
- Talk to your doctor about subsidies if you or someone you support has ongoing health issues.

## Income support for carers

### Supported Living Payment

The Supported Living Payment helps people who are caring full-time at home for a person who has a serious health condition or disability and:

- needs full-time care
- isn't your husband, wife or partner
- would otherwise need hospital care, rest home care, residential disability care, extended care services for severely disabled children and young people, or care of a similar kind.

If you're a parent who needs to provide full-time care and attention at home for your dependent child with high needs, you may be able to get this benefit.

A doctor will need to complete a medical certificate advising whether the person you're caring for meets the medical criteria – this is usually the doctor of the person you're caring for.

There is an income limit for this benefit and you don't have to be single to receive it.

### Who to talk to about the Supported Living Payment

Talk to Work and Income – for contact details, **see page 58**.

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## Income support for the person cared for

### New Zealand Superannuation

This is for people who are 65 years or over who have lived in New Zealand for at least a total of 10 years since turning 20 (with 5 of those years since turning 50).

You can apply online at [seniors.msd.govt.nz](https://seniors.msd.govt.nz)

### Who to talk to about New Zealand Superannuation

Talk to Senior Services – for contact details, [see page 57](#).

### Veteran's Pension

This is for people who are aged 65 years or over who have served in the New Zealand Armed Forces in a war or other emergency. It's paid at the same rate as New Zealand Superannuation.

You can apply online. Go to [workandincome.govt.nz](https://workandincome.govt.nz) and choose *Check what you might get*.

### Who to talk to about the Veteran's Pension

Talk to Senior Services – for contact details, [see page 57](#).

### Additional assistance for people 65 and over

Extra financial assistance is available for people 65 and over. This includes the Accommodation Supplement, Disability Allowance, assistance for hardship and the Funeral Grant. Talk to Senior Services – for contact details, [see page 57](#).

### Supported Living Payment

The Supported Living Payment is for people who are permanently and severely restricted in their capacity to

work because of a health condition or disability. A medical certificate is required to confirm the condition.

People who are totally blind can receive this benefit. It's also available to full-time carers of people needing hospital-level (or equivalent) care. See *Income support for carers* above.

The Supported Living Payment has an income test. You can apply online. Go to [workandincome.govt.nz](https://workandincome.govt.nz) and choose *Check what you might get*.

### Who to talk to about the Supported Living Payment

Talk to Work and Income – for contact details, [see page 58](#).

### Jobseeker Support

Jobseeker Support helps people who would like to work, but aren't currently working, or are working fewer hours because of a health condition, injury or disability.

A person may get this benefit if, because of their sickness, injury, disability or pregnancy, they:

- have had to reduce their hours
- have had to stop working
- are not working or are working part-time and find it hard to look for and do full-time work.

A Work Capacity Medical Certificate (or medical certificate with the same information) is required. A person may have to look for work if they're able to work part-time.

Jobseeker Support also has an income test.

### Who to talk to about Jobseeker Support

Talk to Work and Income – for contact details, [see page 58](#).

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## Help with extra costs

### Disability Allowance

The Disability Allowance is a weekly payment for people who have regular, ongoing costs because of a disability or a health condition. It can help pay for things like hearing aid batteries, regular visits to the doctor, prescriptions or some travel costs.

This allowance can be paid for both adults and children. There is an income limit for this allowance.

### Who to talk to about the Disability Allowance

Talk to Work and Income, or Senior Services if the person you're caring for is 65 or over. You'll find contact details on [page 57](#).

### Assistance for hardship

There are a number of types of help available from Work and Income if a person is unable to pay for essential items. You don't have to be on a benefit to get this help. Work and Income will look at your circumstances to see what help may be available.

### Who to talk to about hardship assistance

Talk to Work and Income, or Senior Services if the person you're caring for is 65 or over. You'll find contact details on [page 57](#).

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## Funding for some people with high or very high needs to employ their parents or family member to care for them

### Funded Family Care

Funding may be available for people with high or very high needs to employ a family member to care for them. It's called Funded Family Care and it's available from the Ministry of Health. The carer must be a parent or family member over 18 who lives with the person they support. It enables an eligible disabled person to employ that family carer to provide them with personal care and/or help with household tasks.

You'll find more information on the Ministry of Health's website [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz) – look under *Your health > Services and support > Disability services > Types of disability support > Funded Family Care*.

### Who to talk to about Funded Family Care

Contact your local Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) organisation – [see page 57](#).

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## Extra help with medical costs

### Prescription Subsidy Card

Once you and/or your family have paid the co-payment (usually \$5) for 20 prescription items in a year, you can get a Prescription Subsidy Card. You won't have to pay co-payments on further prescriptions for fully subsidised medicines for the rest of that year. The year starts on 1 February.

Your pharmacist will issue a Prescription Subsidy Card once you reach 20 items. Any pharmacy can now check your prescription electronically so you don't need to keep receipts.

Some prescriptions might carry an additional charge even though you have a Prescription Subsidy Card (for faxed prescriptions or blister packs, for example). Ask your pharmacist to explain any extra charges.

For further information about prescription charges visit [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz) and search for *Prescription Subsidy Card*.

### Community Services Card

The Community Services Card can help with the costs of health care. You'll pay less for some health services and prescriptions when you present your card. There is an income limit to get this card.

The Community Services Card can reduce the cost of:

- prescription fees
- fees for after-hours doctor visits
- visits to a doctor who is not your regular doctor
- glasses, vision tests and eye patches for children under 16 years
- hearing aids, if you're working more than 30 hours per week, a registered job seeker seeking paid employment, doing voluntary work of more than 20 hours per week, studying full-time, or caring for a dependant
- emergency dental care provided by hospitals and approved dental contractors (ask the dental provider if they're an approved contractor)
- travel and accommodation for treatment by a specialist at a public hospital outside your area – [see page 14](#).

You can also use the card for your dependent children aged under 18 years.

### Who to talk to about the Community Services Card

Talk to Senior Services – for contact details, [see page 57](#).

### High Use Health Card

The High Use Health Card can help if the person you support has ongoing health problems that mean they visit their general practice often. You can also use the card to get a subsidy for:

- a visit to a practice that isn't the one they usually visit
- after-hours medical care, and
- some prescription charges.

### Who qualifies?

A High Use Health Card is for someone who has made 12 or more visits to a general practice in the previous 12 months. The card is free, and there is no income limit. It can only be used by the cardholder and does not give benefits to the rest of the family.

### Who to talk to about the High Use Health Card

Visit a general practice to apply for this card.

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## Help when someone has died

### Funeral Grant

A Funeral Grant helps with some of the funeral costs for someone who has died. Generally, the person looking after the funeral arrangements will apply for this.

There is an income and asset test for this grant, which is based on the circumstances of the deceased person at the time they passed away.

## Who to talk to about the Funeral Grant

Talk to Work and Income, or Senior Services if the person was 65 or over. You'll find contact details on [page 57](#).

ACC and Veterans' Affairs also pay funeral grants. Read more about help available from ACC on [page 41](#).

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## Help with housing costs

### Accommodation Supplement

This payment can help with rent, board or the cost of owning a home. You don't have to be getting a benefit to receive an Accommodation Supplement. There is an income and cash asset limit for this help.

The Accommodation Supplement isn't for people who are renting a property from Housing New Zealand or an approved social housing provider.

### Who to contact about the Accommodation Supplement

Talk to Work and Income, or Senior Services if the person you're caring for is 65 or over. You'll find contact details on [page 57](#).

### Rates Rebate Scheme

Ratepayers on a low income may be able to get assistance to help with the cost of their rates. For more information about the scheme, visit [dia.govt.nz](http://dia.govt.nz) and search *Rates Rebate Scheme*.

### Who to talk to about the Rates Rebate Scheme

Talk to your local council about applying for the Rates Rebate Scheme.

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## Extra help if you're caring for a child

### Child Disability Allowance

Child Disability Allowance is a payment made to the main carer of a child or young person with a serious disability. It's paid in recognition of the extra care and attention needed for that child.

There is no income or asset test for the Child Disability Allowance. Carers of dependent children may be able to get both the Child Disability Allowance and the Disability Allowance.

### Who to talk to about the Child Disability Allowance

Talk to Work and Income, or Senior Services if you're 65 or over. You'll find contact details on [page 57](#).

### Childcare assistance

You may be able to get financial help toward childcare. There are two options:

- Childcare Subsidy for preschool children
- OSCAR Subsidy for older children (it usually stops when the child turns 14, or 18 for children with a disability).

Both of these subsidies are income tested.

### Who to contact about the Childcare Subsidy or OSCAR Subsidy

Talk to Work and Income – for contact details, [see page 58](#).

### Working for Families Tax Credits

Working for Families Tax Credits are for families with dependent children aged 18 or younger. Payments vary according to income and how many children are in the family.

## What help is available?

There are four different types of payments (tax credits), and families may be entitled to more than one type.

Payment type	Description
Family tax credit	Paid to families with dependent children.
In-work tax credit	Paid to families with dependent children who work a certain number of hours each week.
Minimum family tax credit	A top-up paid to make sure the annual income of a family with dependent children does not fall below a certain amount.
Parental tax credit	Paid to families with a newborn baby. You can't get this payment if you're on paid parental leave or receiving an income-tested benefit.

### Who to talk to about Working for Families Tax Credits

Contact Inland Revenue unless you're applying for a benefit. As part of your benefit application, Work and Income will assess whether you get tax credits.

### Working for Families calculators

Working for Families has online calculators you can use to check the amount of Working for Families Tax Credits, Accommodation Supplement and Childcare Assistance you may get – visit [workingforfamilies.govt.nz](http://workingforfamilies.govt.nz)

The card is sent automatically to all New Zealand residents who are granted New Zealand Superannuation, a Veteran's Pension, or a main benefit (e.g. Emergency Benefit) at age 65 or over. If you haven't yet received these types of assistance but are eligible for a card, you will need to apply for one.

More information about how to get the SuperGold Card and the businesses that offer discounts to SuperGold Card holders is available from [supergold.govt.nz](http://supergold.govt.nz)

### Who to talk to about the SuperGold Card

Call **0800 25 45 65** if you have a question about the SuperGold Card.

## Extra help for people 65 and over

### SuperGold Card

The SuperGold Card is a discount and concession card issued free to seniors and veterans. It gives cardholders discounts at a wide range of businesses nationwide, and access to local council services and government concessions such as free off-peak public transport.

# Transport and travel

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Funding may be available to help with transport and travel costs if you or the person you support has a lot of difficulty getting around.

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## National Travel Assistance (NTA) Scheme for Health or Disability Services

People who are eligible under the NTA Scheme may receive assistance with travel and accommodation costs. They may receive assistance when they need to travel often or for long distances, need to stay in or near hospital for long periods (for example, to be close to a neonatal baby), or are young or need a supporter when using publicly funded specialist health or disability services.

### Services covered under NTA

To get this service, you need to be referred by a specialist (not your doctor) to see another specialist or to receive specialist services. Both the specialists must be part of a service funded by government. For example, this could be a renal dialysis centre, a specialist cancer service, a needs assessment and service co-ordination organisation, or a child development service.

## Who to talk to about NTA

Eligibility for this service can depend on a number of factors, such as how far you have to travel and how often, or whether you have a Community Services Card. It's important that you get NTA advice at the time you're informed that you'll require specialist health and disability services.

For information and assistance on the NTA:

- contact your local District Health Board's (DHB's) travel co-ordinator, outpatient clinic, ward administrator, a hospital social worker or your specialist
- visit the NTA web page at [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz) and select *Your health > Travel assistance*, or
- call **0800 281 222**.

You may not be able to get help from this scheme if you already get – or could get – help with travel costs from somewhere else (e.g. ACC).

## If you or the person you support is a client of ACC

Talk to ACC. See *Help available to injured people* on [page 42](#) for more information. Contact your ACC case manager, if you have one, or call **0800 101 996**.





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## Total Mobility Scheme

The Total Mobility Scheme is a subsidised taxi service. It works using vouchers or electronic cards that give a 50 per cent discount on normal taxi fares, up to a specified level. The purpose of the scheme is to help eligible people with impairments access appropriate transport so they can participate more fully in their community.

This assistance is provided in the form of subsidised, door-to-door transport services wherever scheme transport providers operate. It isn't intended to be a substitute for transport services that are the funding responsibility of other agencies. The scheme is part funded by the New Zealand Transport Agency and part funded and managed by local authorities (usually regional councils).

### Who qualifies?

The scheme is available to people who are unable to use public transport due to the nature of their disability. This includes:

- getting to the place where the transport departs
- getting onto the transport
- riding securely
- getting off the transport
- getting to the destination.

For further information visit [nzta.govt.nz](http://nzta.govt.nz) and search for *Total Mobility*.

### Who to talk to about the Total Mobility Scheme

Contact Auckland Transport or the Total Mobility co-ordinator at your regional council to find out how the scheme works in your area.

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## Mobility Parking Permit Scheme

With a Mobility Parking Permit (a card you display in your car), you can use mobility carparks provided by councils, hospitals, supermarkets and other organisations. Some councils offer additional discounts on standard carparks. The permit is registered to an individual and can only be used when the permit holder is using the vehicle.

### Who qualifies?

The scheme is open to people of all ages, and the person you support qualifies if they:

- are unable to walk and always rely on the use of a wheelchair
- have severely restricted ability to walk distances due to a health condition or disability – for example, they require the use of mobility aids, experience severe pain or breathlessness – or
- have a health condition or disability that requires them to have physical contact or close supervision to get around safely and cannot be left unattended – for example, they experience disorientation, confusion or severe anxiety.

People with a short-term disability through an accident or illness may apply for a short-term permit.

There is a fee to apply for a permit and for renewals. Short-term permits can be for a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months. Long-term permits last for five years.

CCS Disability Action's mobility parking website [mobilityparking.org.nz](http://mobilityparking.org.nz) has information about the scheme and how to apply. If you have a long-term permit, you can renew your permit online.

### Who to talk to about the Mobility Parking Scheme

Talk to your doctor, who will need to certify your application.

If you wish to talk to or visit a CCS Disability Action branch about the scheme, call **0800 227 2255** or visit their website for the location of branches [ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz/regions](http://ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz/regions)

The Carers NZ infopack includes mobility parking brochures. You can also get a brochure at [mobilityparking.org.nz](http://mobilityparking.org.nz) – go to *About Mobility Parking Permits*.

You can get an application form from your doctor, CCS Disability Action's mobility parking website or from many Disability Information Centres – [see page 54](#).

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## Vehicle modifications

Some people may be able to get help with modifying a vehicle – [see page 51](#).

# People

In this section, you'll find a range of organisations available to support carers or the person you care for.



# Assessing needs

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An assessment is needed to get most health and disability support services funded by the Ministry of Health or a District Health Board (DHB).

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Read the section about ACC if you or the person you're caring for is recovering from an injury – [see page 41](#).

## The assessment process

The best way to find out about available support services is to contact a Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC) organisation – [see page 20](#). A NASC organisation or NASC equivalent will work with the person you support and, where appropriate, with you as their carer to identify the person's needs. Some NASC organisations will assess your needs as a carer separately.

The NASC organisation will tell you what kinds of support and services are available and help you co-ordinate those services.

The person you support should have regular reviews (often this happens once a year). You can ask for another assessment at any time if your needs or the needs of the person you're supporting change. Make sure you let the NASC organisation know if you need a new assessment done urgently.

## What support services are available?

A wide range of services may be available for the person you support.

Examples of these are:

- home and community support (such as help with housework or personal care – [see page 25](#))
- facility-based respite, Carer Support Subsidy and Individualised Funding – Respite ([see pages 21–22](#))
- day activity services (for example, day care programmes for older people)
- residential care (living away from home, for example, a community residential home for people with a disability, or a rest home or long-stay hospital care for older people)
- other services depending on the needs of the person you support and the area where you live.

Not all health-funded services need a NASC assessment. You can, of course, get emergency services, GP services and district nursing direct if you need them.



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## Who may get help?

You can contact a NASC organisation or its equivalent direct or a health professional may refer you to one. The first thing the NASC organisation will do is check whether the person you support is eligible for services or if you, as a carer, can get support services. There are two main types of NASC organisations.

- For younger people (generally under 65 years) with:
  - a physical, intellectual and/or sensory disability that is likely to last for six months or more, or
  - chronic health conditions and high ongoing needs.
- For older people (aged 65 years and over) and people aged 50–64 years who have similar needs.

The NASC organisations in some DHBs assess the needs of people across a range of services, including people with mental health conditions, alcohol or drug issues. In other DHBs, there are separate NASCs or mental health case managers who look after the needs of people with mental health, alcohol or drug issues. There may also be DHB care coordination services that assess the needs of, and look after people with, chronic health needs.

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## Getting in touch

### Younger people (generally under 65 years)

For a list of NASCs for younger disabled people or younger people with chronic health needs:

- visit the Ministry of Health website **health.govt.nz** and search *Needs assessment and service coordination services*
- call the Ministry of Health's disability number **0800 DSD MOH (0800 373 664)**, or
- email **disability@moh.govt.nz**

### Older people (aged 65 years and over and people aged 50–64 years who have similar needs)

For a list of NASCs for older people, visit **health.govt.nz** and search *Support services for older people* or call your local DHB or your local hospital and ask to talk to the NASC team for older people.

### People with mental health, alcohol or other drug issues

Most people should consult their doctor in the first instance. Your doctor may refer you to your local DHB mental health and addiction service, which can assess your need for specialist treatment and/or support services.

If you already receive services from DHB mental health and addiction services, contact your DHB case manager if you think your need for support services has changed.

### Services for people of all ages and people with mental health, alcohol or other drug issues

You can find information at the Ministry of Health website **health.govt.nz**. Choose *Your health > Service and support > Mental health services*. On that page, you'll see the link for *Mental health services in your area* which in turn contains links to DHBs that fund mental health services.

You can also visit **hdc.org.nz**. Choose *About us > Mental health and addictions > Help and support*.

### If you get stuck

In the first instance, you should talk to:

- your local NASC organisation
- your doctor (if you have an illness-related need)
- ACC (if you or the person you support has had an injury), or
- your local DHB mental health service case manager (if you have one).

If this doesn't work, you can contact:

- the Nationwide Health and Disability Consumer Advocacy Service (**see page 56**)
- Disability Support Services for younger disabled people: **0800 DSD MOH (0800 373 664)**, or
- the Ministry of Health (**see page 56** for contact numbers).

# Having a break

This section covers help that is funded by the Ministry of Health and District Health Boards (DHBs) to help you have a break from your caring role and responsibilities. ACC may also help you have a break if the person you care for has an injury (see page 41).

Sometimes, you may feel like you need a break from caring. It's important for carers to plan regular breaks and time out. Not doing this can impact on your wellbeing and may cause you to become burnt out or unwell. Don't let it happen to you. Having a break gives you the chance to 'recharge your batteries' and follow your own interests. The person you care for may benefit from a break too.

Breaks can be planned in advance, but at times of crisis or emergency need you may have to organise a break urgently (say, if you become ill or someone else in the family requires help). It may be useful for you to have a family emergency plan so you know who to call and how to get support in an emergency. Carers NZ has free tools to help you – visit [carers.net.nz](http://carers.net.nz) and search *Emergency care planning tools* to access these.

You can also download a free copy of the *Time Out* respite planning guide at the Carers NZ website. The site includes other respite planning tools you may find helpful.

## What help is available?

Respite aims to provide a full-time carer with a break from their caring role. Options that may be available to help you take a break are:

- facility-based respite
- the Carer Support Subsidy
- Individualised Funding – Respite.

You may get a combination of these supports, depending on your needs, the needs of the person you care for, and the services that are available in your area. Your break can be for a short period (half a day or longer, including overnight) or for several weeks, depending on your circumstances.

### Facility-based respite

Facility-based respite is a 24-hour overnight break in a facility for the person you support. Facilities include dedicated homes for respite, rest homes and residential homes. These services are contracted by the Ministry of Health and DHBs. A NASC organisation will allocate a number of days of respite based on your assessed needs. Sometimes you will have to wait until a space is available. An assessment determines the number of days' break you will be allocated.

## Carer Support Subsidy

The Carer Support Subsidy reimburses some of the costs of supporting the person you care for. It's intended to help you take some time out for yourself.

You must be a full-time carer to receive the Carer Support Subsidy. A full-time carer is someone who provides more than 4 hours a day of unpaid care, for example, the parent of a disabled child.

Usually, you're given a certain number of days a year through an assessment process. The number of hours or days Carer Support is funded depends on your needs and those of the person you care for. You choose how you want to take a break and pay for it with the subsidy. You will usually have to pay a 'top-up' for the service.

Carer Support can be paid to:

- friends and some family members
- neighbours or other people who provide relief care
- formal services (e.g. a rest home).

## Individualised Funding – Respite

If the person you care for has been assessed as needing Ministry of Health-funded respite care, they can manage their allocation through Individualised Funding. Individualised Funding gives greater choice and control over how and when support is provided and from whom. To find out more, see [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz) (search for *Individualised Funding*) or talk to your NASC organisation (see page 57).





## Help finding a relief carer

MyCare is an online carer matching service that aims to help carers find and access relief carers more easily. Ask your NASC organisation to refer you to the service. You can also access MyCare at its website **mycare.co.nz** or by calling **0800 677 700**.

## Who to ask

The best way to take a break depends on the needs of the person you support. This table shows who to contact based on your situation.

Type of need/disability	Who to ask
Younger person (generally aged under 65) with a chronic health condition and very high ongoing health needs (cancer, emphysema, diabetes, cystic fibrosis etc)	Contact a NASC organisation – <a href="#">see page 57</a> .
Younger disabled person (generally aged under 65)	Contact a NASC organisation – <a href="#">see page 57</a> .
Older person, aged 65 years and over, or person aged 50–64 years who has similar needs	Contact a NASC organisation – <a href="#">see page 57</a> .
A person with mental health, alcohol or other drug issues	Talk to your doctor. In some places, a NASC organisation may be able to help you ( <a href="#">see page 57</a> ).  Contact your local DHB mental health service case manager (if you have one).
A person with an injury	Contact ACC – <a href="#">see page 54</a> .

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## Reviewing your needs

The needs of the person you support and your needs as a carer will be reviewed regularly (often this happens once a year). You or the person you care for can ask for a review sooner if you feel your needs have changed. Talk to your doctor or, for most people, your local NASC organisation ([see page 57](#)). If you need this to be done urgently, make this clear when asking for a new assessment.

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## If you have a question about making a Carer Support claim

If you already receive Carer Support, the forms you get will tell you how to make a claim. You can also call the Carer Support Subsidy helpline on **0800 281 222** (press 1) if you have a question or to follow up on subsidy payments.

## If you get stuck

In the first instance, you should talk to:

- your local NASC organisation
- your doctor (if you have an illness-related need)
- ACC (if you or the person you support has had an injury), or
- your local DHB mental health service case manager (if you have one).

If this doesn't work, you can contact:

- the Nationwide Health and Disability Consumer Advocacy Service ([see page 56](#))
- Disability Support Services for younger disabled people:  
**0800 DSD MOH (0800 373 664)**
- the Ministry of Health ([see page 56](#) for contact numbers).

# Help at home

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This section describes home help and personal care services funded by the Ministry of Health and District Health Boards (DHBs). If the person you support is a client of ACC, they may also receive ACC-funded home help and personal care services – see page 42.

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Caring can involve some highly personal tasks, so it's important that both parties have a shared understanding about what's involved. The person you support may feel uncomfortable about having you care for them, and unhappy about depending on you. Chat about what tasks need to be done each day and agree on when and how to do them. You may not agree on everything, but working as a team (and having a sense of humour) will help to overcome most challenges.

The person you support may need home help or help with personal care. Examples include essential cleaning, laundry or making a meal (home help or household management), or helping with showering, eating, getting in or out of bed and dressing (personal care). This is sometimes called home and community support.

## Who may receive these services?

The person you support must need home help or help with personal care due to their disability or health condition. Once their needs have been identified through the NASC organisation assessment process, it will then be determined how they will be met – this could be through a variety of avenues, for example, through government-funded support, family or friends.

A Community Services Card is needed to get funded home help (cleaning etc). You can read about the Community Services Card on [page 11](#). The person you support does not need a Community Services Card to get personal care (showering, eating, dressing etc).

## How the person you support gets help

The person you support will have to have their needs assessed to get funded help at home. How you get this help depends on your situation.

Type of need/disability	Who to ask
Younger person (generally aged under 65) with a chronic health condition and very high ongoing health needs (cancer, emphysema, diabetes, cystic fibrosis etc)	Contact a NASC organisation – <a href="#">see page 57</a> .
Younger disabled person (generally aged under 65)	Contact a NASC organisation – <a href="#">see page 57</a> .
Older person, aged 65 years and over, or person aged 50–64 years who has similar needs	Contact a NASC organisation – <a href="#">see page 57</a> .
A person with mental health, alcohol or other drug issues	Talk to your doctor. In some places, a NASC organisation may be able to help you ( <a href="#">see page 57</a> ).  Contact your local DHB mental health service case manager (if you have one).
A person with an injury	Contact ACC – <a href="#">see page 54</a> .

### If you get stuck

In the first instance, you should talk to:

- your local NASC organisation
- your doctor (if you have an illness-related need)
- ACC (if you or the person you support has had an injury), or
- your local DHB mental health service case manager (if you have one).

If this doesn't work, you can contact:

- the Nationwide Health and Disability Consumer Advocacy Service – [see page 56](#)
- Disability Support Services for younger people: **0800 DSD MOH (0800 373 664)**
- the Ministry of Health – [see page 56](#) for contact numbers.

# Children and young people with special education needs

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Help is available if your child has education needs related to their disability. The need may be a physical disability, a vision or hearing difficulty, issues with communication, learning or behaviour, or a combination of these.

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All services are free if your child is eligible to receive them. Sometimes families may choose to pay for private professionals such as a speech therapist, physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

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## Before your child starts school

Specialist staff from the Ministry of Education work alongside other agencies to support children with moderate to severe special education needs at home or in kindergartens, early childhood education and care centres, and Kōhanga Reo.

### What help is available?

Services can include:

- advice for teachers and parents
- information about play techniques to teach the child new skills (drawing, blocks etc)

- ways to improve social and learning skills and manage behaviour (how to reinforce good behaviour, language to use when talking with your child etc)
- speech language therapy (helping your child gain language skills etc)
- education support workers (helping your child one-to-one at their early childhood education centre)
- developing special resources such as communication aids (special picture-based communication boards to help your child communicate if they can't speak etc)
- co-ordinating physiotherapy, occupational therapy and equipment (working with your health and disability therapists if required).

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## If your child is at school

Most children with special education needs receive support and services from their school. If necessary, schools can arrange for specialist teachers to provide services or make a referral to the Ministry of Education's special education services. An assessment of your child may be needed to determine their individual need and the relevant support required for them to participate, learn and achieve at school.

All schools have access to Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour who work with students who have learning and behaviour challenges, their teachers and families. Schools may also access support from:

- Resource Teachers: Vision
- Resource Teachers: Deaf and Hard of hearing.

Assessment is carried out by the class teacher and school staff in collaboration with whoever else needs to be involved including specialist staff, the parent(s) or guardian(s), and the child. The assessment is focused on what support your child needs to learn and achieve. The information gained may be used to tailor an education plan for your child (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP).

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## Students with high learning needs

A very small number (3 per cent) of children are defined as having high needs and meet the criteria for specialist help through a number of schemes and services available through the Ministry of Education. Some of these students may attend a special school.

- The Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) provides resources for students with severe disabilities in the areas of learning, vision, hearing, mobility, language and social communication. ORS support is for extra teacher time, specialist programmes and therapies and teacher aide support.
- The Communication Service supports children who have difficulties with talking, listening and understanding language.
- The Severe Behaviour Service assists children experiencing challenging behaviour difficulties.
- The School High Health Needs Fund supports children with serious medical conditions so they can be included in school programmes.
- The three Regional Health Schools (Northern, Central and Southern) provide teaching support for children who are unwell and can't go to their usual school for a long period (they may have a physical or mental illness), are in a health-funded mental health programme, or are returning to their usual school after being away for a long time and need support.
- Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, The Correspondence School provides distance education for children and young people from early childhood through to secondary. To find out more, visit [tekura.school.nz](http://tekura.school.nz) or call **0800 659 988**.

For information about these services see the parent information kit on the Ministry of Education website [education.govt.nz](http://education.govt.nz)



## Who to contact

If you're concerned about your child's learning:

- talk to:
  - your Plunket nurse, Iwi Health Authority or early childhood education service (for preschoolers)
  - the classroom/form teacher or the school principal (for children at primary or secondary school), or the school's Special Education Needs Co-ordinator if the school has one
  - your doctor
- contact the Ministry of Education's special education information line **0800 622 222**.

## If you get stuck

All schools are expected to be open and welcoming to every child whatever their ability. If you feel a school is being unwelcoming or is reluctant to enrol your child because they have special education needs, then this is of concern to the Ministry of Education. Please let them know if this happens to you – call and ask to speak to the district manager at your nearest Ministry of Education district office. To find a list of contact details for each office visit **education.govt.nz** and search for *Contact special education*.

# Balancing your caring role with work and study

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## Your rights at work

If you have significant caring responsibilities, you will need support at work. This section gives you information on what you can expect from your employer.

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## Negotiating employment agreements

Every employee must have a written employment agreement. This can be an individual agreement or a collective agreement (one involving a union). You can negotiate a variation to your terms and conditions of employment in this agreement. To help you with this, the Employment New Zealand website has an online tool called the Employment Agreement Builder. Go to **employment.govt.nz** and search *Employment agreement*.

The online tool includes draft clauses about hours and days of work, which can be modified to reflect your caring situation and the individual flexibility you negotiate with your employer.

## The right to request flexible working arrangements

If you're an employee, you have the right to request flexible working arrangements from the first day of your employment. All employers have a duty to consider any requests. The right to request and duty to consider come under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act.

Working arrangements cover hours of work, days of work and place of work. Flexibility in the arrangements could include part-time work, compressed hours, shift work, working from home, more time off in school holidays and adjusted starting and finishing times for the work day.

## How to make a request

Make a time to talk to your employer to work through your request for flexible work and any questions or concerns your employer may have.

You need to make your request in writing and include information to help your employer understand your needs. You can find out more about how to make a request, including a template form, at **employment.govt.nz** (search for *Flexible working*).





### Can my employer say no?

Employers are required to consider and respond to requests within one month. They can say no to your request with their reasons explained but only on the grounds provided by the Act. Talk to your employer about your concerns if you think they haven't dealt with your request appropriately. You can get free employment information by phoning the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on **0800 20 90 20**.

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### Sick leave entitlements

If you're employed, you can use your own sick leave to care for your partner or a dependant (such as a child or elderly parent) if they're sick or injured and need care. You can find out more about sick leave entitlements at **employment.govt.nz** and search for *Holidays and leave*.

### Who to talk to

Make a time to talk to your employer about your caring situation (or your manager or human resources manager if you work for a larger organisation). They should be aware that you may sometimes need time out to attend medical appointments or cope with unexpected situations, or need their understanding if the person you support is unwell or in hospital.

It might also be helpful for colleagues to know that you have a caring role, so they can help at difficult times.

You can find more information about employment rights, including break entitlements and holidays, at **employment.govt.nz**

## Employment and study

Balancing your caring role with work or study can be challenging. Here are some sources of help available to you.

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### Careers New Zealand

Careers New Zealand is a government organisation that helps people match their talents and aspirations with the needs of employers and the economy. This includes free information and advice for:

- young people (and their parents, families, whānau and mentors) who may be at school, about to leave school, in tertiary training or having a gap year, or who have left school early and are unsure about their career plans
- jobseekers, including people who are currently out of work, in between work, actively looking for a job or returning to work, for example, after raising a family or returning from overseas, and
- people looking to improve their skills or change their career path.

#### Who to contact

Free information and interactive tools are available online at [careers.govt.nz](http://careers.govt.nz) or by talking in confidence to a careers advisor – call **0800 222 733**.

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### Carers NZ

Visit the Carers NZ website at [carers.net.nz](http://carers.net.nz) for information about balancing employment with family caregiving. For individual advice, phone Carers NZ's helpline, **0800 777 797**.

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### Work and Income

Work and Income can help you plan for or move into paid work or training.

If you want help with your job search, they will work with you to identify your needs, match you to appropriate vacancies, and support you with your search for work and once you're in work.

They may be able to help you with some of the costs of looking for work and attending interviews.

See [page 58](#) for ways to contact Work and Income.

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### StudyLink

StudyLink is a service of the Ministry of Social Development. StudyLink seeks to make sure students get the financial support they're entitled to so that they can complete their study.

#### Who to contact

Visit [studylink.govt.nz](http://studylink.govt.nz) for information about StudyLink help. You can also apply online for a Student Allowance, Student Loan or course-related costs.

Other ways to get in touch:

- phone **0800 88 99 00**
- fax free **0800 88 33 88**
- Deaf Link fax free **0800 621 621**.

Call StudyLink to make an appointment if you need to visit one of the StudyLink Outreach offices listed on the website.

# Taking care of yourself

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It's easy to become isolated and stressed when you're a carer. It's important to take care of yourself – looking after your own physical and emotional wellbeing will help to keep you going.

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## Getting out and keeping healthy

The demands of caring may make it difficult for you to have time for yourself. Taking time out for yourself, even if it's for a few hours a week, can make a big difference. Having time to relax, catch up with friends and family or learn a new skill can be beneficial to your wellbeing.

For more information about having a break [see page 21](#).

Visit Carers NZ at [carers.net.nz](http://carers.net.nz) for articles and resources to support your wellbeing as a carer. These include:

- *Time Out* – A self-care and respite planning guide
- *Are you caring for an older family member or friend?* – A wellbeing resource for carers of older people
- *Are you a young carer?* – Information and wellbeing advice for children and young people in caring roles.

Carers NZ's resources are available online and in print form. To order print copies phone **0800 777 797**.

## Care Matters

Care Matters is a learning and wellbeing service providing face-to-face events, such as workshops, web based information and resources, and a free phone service for carers.

Go to [carematters.org.nz](http://carematters.org.nz) or phone **0508 236 236** for further information.

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## Talking to someone

If you're feeling worried or anxious, talking to someone about your situation can help. You may want to talk to family, friends or neighbours. In many areas, carer support groups can keep you in touch with other people who share similar experiences. See [carers.net.nz](http://carers.net.nz) or call **0800 777 797** to find your nearest carer support group.

It's normal for people to get stressed at different stages in life. This can particularly be the case when your caring role changes – whether you're new to a caring role and unsure of the supports available, or the person you're supporting has increased caring needs.

If you're finding your thoughts and emotions overwhelming, you may need extra support. Some options are to:

- talk to your doctor or another health professional about how you're feeling
- call Lifeline **0800 543 354**
- call Youthline **0800 376 633**
- call Healthline **0800 611 116**
- call the Depression Helpline on **0800 111 757**
- call the Alcohol Drug Helpline **0800 787 797**
- call the Gambling Helpline **0800 654 655**
- go to **addictionshelp.org.nz** for a regionalised database of publicly funded addiction treatment and advice services throughout New Zealand
- go to **supportingfamilies.org.nz** – Supporting Families New Zealand (in some areas called 'SF' or Schizophrenia Fellowship) is for families of people who have a mental health disorder.

## Staying injury-free

Back strains from lifting and falls from slipping on wet floors are common injuries for carers. Injuries to people being cared for are often the result of being dropped during a transfer. Bedsores (also called pressure injuries or pressure sores) are another issue. The information included here will help you avoid injuring yourself and the person you're caring for. The Carers NZ website is another source of useful information.

## Moving people

Guard against injuring yourself or the person you're caring for by having a plan before trying to help them move or transfer from one place to another. Here are some things to think about:

The person	<p>Are they ready to move?</p> <p>Do any aids or equipment need to go with them?</p> <p>Have we talked about the move?</p> <p>Are they likely to fall?</p>
You	<p>Do I know enough to move them safely?</p> <p>Am I wearing non-slip footwear to reduce the risk of fall for both of us?</p> <p>Am I tired and more likely to make mistakes?</p>
The task	<p>What is the best way to do this?</p> <p>What is the task I need to do?</p> <p>How long do I need? Don't rush.</p> <p>Do I need equipment?</p>
The place	<p>Are the surfaces slippery?</p> <p>Have I made enough space to move?</p> <p>Can I reduce shadows – is there enough lighting?</p>

Practical videos and the guide 'Supporting people to move at home' are available from [acc.co.nz](http://acc.co.nz). Choose *Preventing injuries > At work > Industry specific safety*.

## Falls

You can prevent or reduce the risk of falls by identifying and removing hazards around the home and improving the health and fitness of the person you're caring for. For more tips on avoiding falls around the home visit [acc.co.nz](http://acc.co.nz). Choose *Preventing injuries > Falls*.

Surface	Make sure the person is on a supportive surface.
Skin inspection	Check for discolouration and soreness including under or around medical devices.
Keep people moving	Change the person's position often.
Incontinence	Keep the person clean and dry.
Nutrition and hydration	Keep the person eating healthily and drinking plenty of fluids.

For more information visit [nzwcs.org.nz](http://nzwcs.org.nz). Choose *Pressure Injury Advisory Group > Worldwide stop pressure injury day*.

## Preventing bedsores/pressure injuries

As you know, the person you care for can develop bedsores if they stay in one place for a long time. These are painful and can lead to serious consequences, including life-threatening infections. Here are five things you can do to prevent bedsores:

- If you want to change your own behaviour, call the 'It's Not OK' information line **0800 456 450** or visit [areyouok.org.nz](http://areyouok.org.nz)

## Dealing with abuse or neglect

Use the following sources to get help if you're at risk of, or experiencing any form of abuse or neglect. Use these sources if the person you're caring for is experiencing or witnessing violence at home:

- Call the emergency services on **111** if they're in immediate danger.
- Visit [areyouok.org.nz](http://areyouok.org.nz), which will link you to family violence support services.

ACC can provide counselling support if the person you support has experienced sexual abuse or assault. Your doctor can help you with making a claim. ACC has a specialist unit to support people with sexual abuse and assault claims. You can call them direct on **0800 735 566** (Monday–Friday 8am to 5pm). The website [findsupport.co.nz](http://findsupport.co.nz) gives guidance on getting ACC-funded counselling support.

# Contacts in times of mental health crisis

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You should contact one of the following services if you or someone you know has reached a mental health crisis point which requires urgent action.

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- Your local mental health crisis intervention service. The phone number for this service is in the front of your phone book – see the section called *Hospitals & other health service providers*. Alternatively, you can visit **health.govt.nz** and search for *Crisis assessment teams*.
- Your local hospital emergency department.
- Call emergency services on **111** and ask for help depending on the situation.



# Help with managing bladder or bowel control

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Incontinence is a loss of bladder and/or bowel control.

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## What help is available?

Continence advisors are available to help people who are finding it difficult to manage bowel and/or bladder problems at home. They can help you or the person you support with ways to manage bladder and/or bowel control and advise which products are best for your needs.

A thorough assessment will determine the type and level of incontinence. Assessment services (and some continence products) are available nationwide. An assessment is required to see if a person qualifies for free continence products.

## Who to talk to?

You can ask your doctor to refer the person you support to a continence advisor, or you can refer yourself. For free information pamphlets and a referral to your local continence service, phone the Continence NZ (NZ Continence Association) helpline on **0800 650 659**. You can also find the nationwide list of continence services at the Association's website – **[continence.org.nz](http://continence.org.nz)**. Choose *Consumer info > Continence service providers for adults and children*.

# Making and resolving complaints

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You have the right to make a complaint if you're unhappy with a health or disability service you have received. The rights everyone using a health or disability service have are set out in the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights.

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An independent Commissioner – called the Health and Disability Commissioner – is responsible for promoting and protecting these rights. The Code covers all public and private providers offering any form of health or disability service, including hospitals, rest homes, disability homes, ambulance services, doctors, nurses, complementary health therapists and services for people with impairments.

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## Making a complaint to the service direct

If possible, it's usually best to make a complaint to the service direct, at least in the first instance. Make your complaint to the person or people you're complaining about, their manager or the person in the organisation responsible for receiving complaints (this might be the manager or nurse manager, CEO, quality manager or, in a hospital or other large organisation, the complaints officer). Usually, a large organisation will have a brochure or website telling you who this

person is. If not, call and ask them if they have a complaints person.

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## Making a complaint to a health and disability advocate

Talk to your nearest health and disability advocate if you aren't satisfied with how your complaint was handled by the provider, or don't feel comfortable making a complaint direct to them.

An advocate from the Nationwide Advocacy Service will listen to your concerns and explain the options available to you to resolve your complaint. The advocate works for you and will help you with the actions you choose to take to resolve your concerns.

Advocacy is a proven way of resolving complaints. The service is free, confidential and independent of service providers such as hospitals, government agencies and the Health and Disability Commissioner. Deaf and refugee advocates are available to assist people from these communities.



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## Making a complaint to the Health and Disability Commissioner's office

You can also make a complaint direct to the Health and Disability Commissioner about the quality of a health or disability service you have received. The Commissioner will assess the complaint and decide the most appropriate way to resolve it. In a very small number of cases, the Commissioner may investigate the matter formally.

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### Who to contact

- In the first instance, think about making your complaint direct to the service you're complaining about. The advocacy section of the Health and Disability Commissioner's website **[hdc.org.nz](http://hdc.org.nz)** has some self-advocacy tips as well as a sample letter and complaint form.
- Alternatively, contact the Nationwide Health and Disability Advocacy Service on **0800 555 050** or email **[advocacy@hdc.org.nz](mailto:advocacy@hdc.org.nz)**

### If you get stuck

- You can make a complaint to the agency which funds the service, like ACC or the Ministry of Health.
- If you're not happy with the service from your independent advocate, you can discuss your concerns with their manager or make a complaint to the Director of Advocacy – email **[advocacy@hdc.org.nz](mailto:advocacy@hdc.org.nz)**

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## Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission works to protect and promote human rights in New Zealand. Of particular interest to carers is its advocacy work for disabled people and people with a mental health condition. The Human Rights Commission offers a free, confidential service for members of the public with human rights enquiries and complaints of unlawful discrimination. Read more at **[hrc.co.nz](http://hrc.co.nz)** or call the Commission on **0800 496 877**.

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## Making and resolving complaints with ACC

The ACC Code of Claimants' Rights 2002 sets out what people can expect from ACC. It says people dealing with ACC have a right to:

- be treated with dignity and respect
- be treated fairly and have their views considered
- have their culture, values, and beliefs respected
- have a support person or persons present
- effective communication
- be fully informed
- have their privacy respected
- complain.

You can complain direct to ACC by emailing **[complaints@acc.co.nz](mailto:complaints@acc.co.nz)** or calling the Customer Support Service on **0800 650 222**.

# Planning for emergencies

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Like many family, whānau, and aiga carers, you may fret about emergencies and what will happen to the person you support if something happens to you.

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Put a written plan in place. Carers NZ has developed some emergency care planning tools to help you. These can be viewed and downloaded at **[carers.net.nz](https://carers.net.nz)**

Once completed, give copies to at least one other family member or close friend, and/or to your home support worker or others who should know what to do if you're suddenly unable to continue supporting your family member.

Carers NZ has also designed an Emergency Carer ID Card: you may wish to keep a copy of it in your wallet or handbag, or laminate it and attach it to your key ring. If something happens to you while you're away from home, the card will alert others that the person you support may need help too. This can be freely downloaded for printing at **[carers.net.nz](https://carers.net.nz)**

You'll also find general information about emergency planning at **[getthru.govt.nz](https://getthru.govt.nz)**



# Help available from ACC

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ACC helps New Zealanders stay injury free, and helps people deal with the impacts of injuries when they occur. Help from ACC is available to injured people and to people who care for an injured person.

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## Help available to those caring for someone who is injured

There is support available from ACC if you're caring for someone who is injured, and providing that care in their home.

### Financial support

Payments are available for the care service you provide if you're providing care for longer than a person would naturally provide to a family member who is sick or recovering from surgery. An independent assessment determines the hours of care services the injured person needs. Inland Revenue treats payments for the care services you provide as income. This means sorting out your responsibilities for paying income tax and possibly GST. Contact Inland Revenue for advice on income tax and GST.

### Backup

Alternative arrangements can be made to help you take holidays or a break from your caring role. ACC will help the injured person and their family make these arrangements. The choices include having carers from an agency come in or the injured person moving temporarily into a residential respite care facility.

Emergency backup care from an agency is available if you cannot provide care because of illness or an unforeseen circumstance. The person you're caring for arranges this with ACC.

### Complex medical procedures

If medical procedures such as suctioning airways or changing catheters are part of the care you're providing, ACC will arrange for a Registered Nurse to provide one-on-one training and supervision for these tasks.

If the person you're caring for has a spinal injury and spends a lot of time in bed, you're the first line of defence in avoiding bedsores. A Registered Nurse will show you what to look out for and what to do to avoid bedsores from developing.

## Avoid injuring yourself

A Carers NZ survey found that 42 per cent of carers had injured themselves performing their caring role. Back strains from heavy lifting and slips and falls during transfer moves are common injuries. See the *Staying injury-free* section on [page 34](#) for tips and resources to help you keep safe and healthy.

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## Help available to injured people

If someone you're close to is injured, there are supports and services available to them through ACC. Make sure they get treatment as soon as possible. Hospital staff or their health professional will work out what treatment they need and will contact ACC about cover for their injury. They'll get a letter from ACC confirming this and an invitation to contact them for any further help they may need. If the impact of their injury is complex or enduring, ACC will assign a staff member to help them access the support and services they need.

By law ACC can only provide access to help needed because of an injury. Therefore, ACC uses objective independent assessors who verify a person's injury-related needs and take note of their individual living circumstances.

ACC helps people to access the support and services they need by contributing to the cost of them. Here are some of the supports and services ACC can help cover.

### Treatment and rehabilitation

- Doctors' visits
- Consultations with medical specialists such as orthopaedic surgeons
- Treatments from allied health professionals such as physiotherapists

or rehabilitation professionals such as speech language therapists

- Surgery
- X-rays and diagnostic tests
- Prescribed medicines
- Injury rehabilitation in a specialist residential facility like a spinal unit.

ACC staff can also arrange a rehabilitation plan to help the person you support get back to work.

### Support at home

- Help with personal care tasks like showering, eating, getting in or out of bed or dressing
- Help with tasks like household cleaning and doing the laundry
- Childcare if the person you support cannot do this themselves.

### Support at school

- A teacher aide in the classroom to help with learning tasks and engaging with the curriculum for people who have learning and communications challenges because of an injury.

The Ministry of Education funds accessibility features in the school environment such as wheelchair access ramps and disabled toilets.

### Equipment

- Mobility equipment like wheelchairs and postural support aids like a standing frame
- Equipment to help with lifting such as hoists
- Bedding systems that help prevent bedsores
- Environmental controls like automatic door openers
- Artificial limbs
- Aids to help with eating, showering, and going to the toilet

- Communications devices such as voice recognition software
- Low vision aids such as screen reading software.

### Home modifications

- Equipment such as handrails, access ramps, and ceiling-mounted hoists
- Environmental controls such as automatic door-openers
- Structural modifications to help the person you support to be mobile and independent in their home. Examples include widened halls and doorways or a wet area bathroom.

ACC can also arrange for temporary access ramps and portable accessible bathrooms to enable the person you support to be in their own home while permanent accessibility solutions are planned and put in place.

### Transport

- Help with getting to and from appointments for treatment and rehabilitation
- Help with transportation if the person's injury prevents them from travelling to work or accessing the community. This can include modifications that enable wheelchair users to travel or drive a vehicle.

### Financial support

- Weekly payments for loss of earnings if the person you support is unable to work because of their injury
- Lump sum compensation for people who have permanent impairments because of their injury
- Funeral grants for dependants of a person who has died as a result of an accident.

ACC can only contribute to the cost of these supports and services after an independent assessment has verified the person you support needs them because of their injury.

## Get more information on what's available from ACC

The ACC website for Serious Injury & Disability has more information about the supports and services available to people with enduring impairments or disabilities because of an injury. Visit [disability.acc.co.nz](http://disability.acc.co.nz)

These information sheets and booklets provide more detail on the assistance that is available. Call ACC on **0800 101 996** and ask for each item by its code (shown in brackets):

- Injury-related disability (SIS IS 06)
- Support Needs Assessments for adults (SIS IS 04)
- Support Needs Assessments for children and teenagers (SIS IS 05)
- Choosing who does personal care (SIS IS 12)
- What you need to know as a carer (HCS IS 02)
- Deciding who'll provide your paid care and support (ACC 7023)
- Setting up and managing your private care (ACC 7026)
- Tax and payment information for clients and carers (HCS IS 01)
- Supporting people to move at home (ACC 7116)
- Injury-related equipment needs (SIS IS 15)
- Injury-related housing needs (SIS IS 16)
- Injury-related transport needs (SIS IS 02)
- Starting or returning to work (SIS IS 14).

# Reviewing your caring role

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Supporting someone, especially long-term, can be a big responsibility. It's a good idea to review your caring role regularly, and discuss any challenges with the person you support or with friends and family members. If your friend or family member has significant, ongoing support needs, think carefully about whether a caring role is right for you, and whether you can continue to provide the level of help they need.

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## What to do if you feel like you can't keep caring?

If the person you support is no longer able to look after themselves and you feel you're unable to provide the level of help they need, for whatever reason, you need to discuss together what is best for both of you. You may find that they're also not feeling happy about your situation. If the person you support is finding it difficult to discuss this, or you're finding it hard to talk to them, it may help to get some input from a friend, family member, another carer, or your doctor or social worker.

Allow time to find out about all the options available, if possible.

Also talk to the doctor, social worker or NASC organisation of the person you support to arrange an assessment (or reassessment) of current support needs. There may be more help you can get at home, for example, increased support from social services, equipment in the home, house modifications, or more frequent short-term stays in respite or residential care for the person you support.

Residential or nursing care may be a difficult option for you and the person you support to consider, but it may be a sensible or realistic option. It may feel like you're letting the person you support down, or that you're rejecting them, but it's important to remember that you can only do so much as a carer. If you want to explore residential or nursing care you should talk to the doctor, social worker or NASC organisation of the person you support.

Caring can be physically and mentally exhausting and there are often limits to the level of care that can be provided at home. It's better to put the best supports and care in place than to struggle on until you reach a crisis point.

# When caring ends

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Caring for someone may be a large part of your life, but it's inevitable that things will change over time. This may be because the person you care for has recovered and no longer needs your help, they can no longer be cared for at home, or they have died.

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Whatever your situation, it's important to realise that you're not alone. It will be difficult, but you can find help and support. The Carers NZ website is a good place to start for information and advice. Go to [carers.net.nz](http://carers.net.nz) or phone Carers NZ's helpline, **0800 777 797**.

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## Bereavement

Losing someone close to you is devastating. If you have been caring for that person, the loss can seem even greater. How you cope with the death of the person you cared for is a very personal thing. There is no right or wrong way to deal with grief.

The best help and support often comes from the people you know best and who know you best. You may find that some people seem awkward around you, often because they want to do and say the 'right thing' but are not sure what that is. If you feel able to, tell the people around you what you need from them and how they can help. Close family and friends may also be able to help you do this.

Talking about what has happened, and about the person who died, can help you to come to terms with your loss, and to cope with the feelings you have. Talking to other people who have been bereaved, and who have an understanding of what you're going through, can also help.

Your local hospice or your doctor can put you in touch with a bereavement counsellor or grief support network if you would like this assistance.

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## Rebuilding your life

The ending of your caring role may take time to adjust to. Having more time to yourself may give you the opportunity for a much needed rest, but it can also leave you with a lot of time to fill.

When caring ends, some practical matters will have to be dealt with fairly quickly, for example, benefits and housing, but you don't need to rush into making decisions about what to do next.



When you're ready, you might want to think about finding new challenges, volunteering or learning something new. Again, if you're looking for ideas, **carers.net.nz** is a good place to start.

If you have given up work, worked less or not worked at all because of your caring responsibilities, you may want or need to work or return to work once your caring role ends. Visit the Careers New Zealand website **careers.govt.nz** to explore your options.



# Things

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In this section, you'll find a range of help for equipment, housing and vehicle modifications available to carers or the person you support. It largely covers help funded by the Ministry of Health. For information about what help is available from ACC see page 41.

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Visit the Ministry of Health website at [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz) and search *Equipment and modification services* to read more about the kinds of equipment and modifications available. Print off the pamphlets you're most interested in. Your local Disability Information or Resource Centre will also have copies of these pamphlets.

The Ministry of Education funds equipment for primary and secondary students to support their learning and activities at school – **see page 27**.

For more information on travel and transport options – **see page 14**.



# Equipment

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## What help is available?

The Ministry of Health may be able to help if the person you support needs equipment to live safely at home. Equipment may be available for people with physical, intellectual, sensory (vision or hearing) and/or age-related disability needs. People with chronic health conditions and high ongoing support needs under 65 years may also be able to access equipment.

Equipment might include items to help with:

- personal care, such as eating, going to the toilet and showering (a shower stool or a hoist, for example) and household tasks (such as a kitchen trolley)
- mobility, standing and/or postural support (a walking frame or wheelchair, for example)
- speaking, understanding, writing and making sense of information (such as a communication board, speaking device or software to make it easier to use a computer)
- hearing (such as personal listening systems and alarms)
- vision (such as magnifiers, mobility canes, computer screen reading software and, for some people with severe vision impairment, glasses).

## Subsidy for glasses/spectacles

Children aged 15 years or under with vision problems may be able to get help from the Ministry of Health with the cost of vision tests, glasses (frames,

lenses or repairs) or eye patches if the family or child has a Community Services Card or a High Use Health Card. Your child will need to be assessed by an optometrist (eye specialist). Call **0800 171 981** for more information.

Help for adults may be available from Work and Income. For more information go to **workandincome.govt.nz** and search *Glasses*.

## Hearing aids for children

The Ministry of Health provides funding for hearing aids and FM (frequency modulated) systems for preschoolers, and hearing aids for children and young people 20 years and under who are studying at school or at tertiary level.

A hospital audiologist or a vision/hearing technician who visits preschools or schools can tell you more about the help available.

## Hearing aids for adults

The Ministry of Health provides funding for hearing aids for adults who have complex needs and for those who meet criteria, such as having a Community Services Card and working more than 30 hours per week or studying full-time.

If you need a hearing aid, but don't have a Community Services Card or meet the other criteria, you may be able to get help with the cost of a hearing aid through a subsidy. An audiologist (hearing specialist) can help you apply. For more information call accessible on **0508 001 002** or see **health.govt.nz** and search *Guide hearing aids*.



### Hearing therapy services

The Ministry of Health funds hearing therapy services free of charge. Hearing therapists can assess a person's hearing needs, provide information about hearing aids and other equipment, teach people how to manage their hearing loss and advise them on the equipment that might help them.

Go to [lifeunlimited.net.nz](http://lifeunlimited.net.nz) or call **0800 008 011**.

### How to get help

The needs of the person you support will have to be assessed before they can get help with equipment. Assessors can be occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech language therapists, audiologists and other hearing and vision professionals. For who to contact, see *Who can help you get equipment or home or vehicle modifications?* on [page 51](#).

**Important:** To get this help, you need to follow the assessment process. Don't choose and buy equipment hoping to reclaim the money – if you've already paid for equipment yourself, you generally can't claim the cost back.

### Equipment needed for short-term use

If you need equipment for a short time, you can hire it (either from a pharmacy or by asking your local Disability Information or Resource Centre) or it may be provided through your local District Health Board. If someone is being discharged from hospital, the hospital should arrange the equipment you need at home. Talk to your social worker, discharge nurse or occupational therapist.

# Housing and vehicle modifications

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If the person you support has a long-term disability, you might be able to get help from the Ministry of Health with housing modifications (such as level access shower, handrails or a ramp) or vehicle modifications (for example, a wheelchair carrier or hoist).

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ACC may help with housing or vehicle modifications if the person you support is an ACC client ([see page 41](#)).

People under 65 years with chronic health conditions and high support needs may also be able to get this help.

You will not get funding for housing modifications costing less than \$200, soft furnishings, general maintenance or modifications to your home for work, social or financial reasons.

For housing modifications above a set limit, Work and Income will work out if you have to pay part of these costs. You will not have to contribute to the cost of housing modifications for children 15 years and under.

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## What help is available?

### Housing modifications

Housing modifications might include:

- handrails to make it safer to use the steps into the house
- ramps and/or widening of doors to improve access into the house
- level access shower and other bathroom alterations so a person can use the bathroom safely
- fencing to protect someone who is at risk of injury because of their disability.

Getting housing modifications through the Ministry of Health can take a long time. In most cases, you can only get funding for modifications once, so think carefully about what you need now and in the future. For example, you could think about moving to a house that will be easier for you to live in, getting equipment to help you ([see page 48](#)) or help in the home ([see page 25](#)) before planning expensive housing modifications.

## Vehicle modifications

Access to funding to modify vehicles is quite limited and depends on your personal situation. There are a range of vehicle modifications that may be included.

- **For drivers** – hand controls, seating, ramps, hoists and wheelchair carriers.
- **For passengers** – special seating, safety restraints, ramps, hoists and wheelchair carriers.

In some situations, funding may be available to support the purchase of a vehicle.

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## How to get help

An Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) Assessor (usually an occupational therapist) will assess the needs of the person you support. If the person you support is eligible for housing or vehicle modifications funded by the Ministry of Health, the assessor will forward an application to the appropriate funding agency.

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## Who can help you get equipment or housing or vehicle modifications?

- Call your local hospital and ask for Community Health Services (most EMS Assessors are usually based there) or talk to your doctor.
- To find out more, visit **health.govt.nz** and search *Equipment and modification services*.

## If you get stuck

If you want further information about particular equipment, services or advice on the assessment process:

- contact your local Disability Information or Resource Centre
  - phone **0800 NZFDIC (0800 693 342)**, or visit **nzfdic.org.nz/centres** to find the one nearest you
- visit Enable New Zealand's disability information website at **weka.net.nz** or call **0800 362 253**.

Contact the Ministry of Health to get more information or if you want to make a complaint.

- For general enquiries – phone **0800 373 664** or email **disability@moh.govt.nz**
- For complaints – phone **0800 373 664** or email **dsdcomplaints@moh.govt.nz**

# Lottery grants

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The Lottery Individuals With Disabilities Committee provides funding to disabled people for the purchase of equipment that enables them to better connect with, participate in and contribute to their communities.

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The Committee provides grants for vehicles, vehicle modifications, scooters and other mobility equipment that provides outdoor mobility. It also provides grants to people who have disabilities that affect their communication to purchase equipment to help them communicate.

The Committee does not fund equipment that the Ministry of Health or ACC or any other body has agreed to fund. Funding recipients must be

a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident currently living in New Zealand.

Requests can be made at any time. For information or advice:

- visit **[communitymatters.govt.nz](https://communitymatters.govt.nz)** and select *Grant Funding > Lottery Grants > Individuals with Disabilities*
- call **0800 824 824**, or
- email **[iwdfunding@dia.govt.nz](mailto:iwdfunding@dia.govt.nz)**

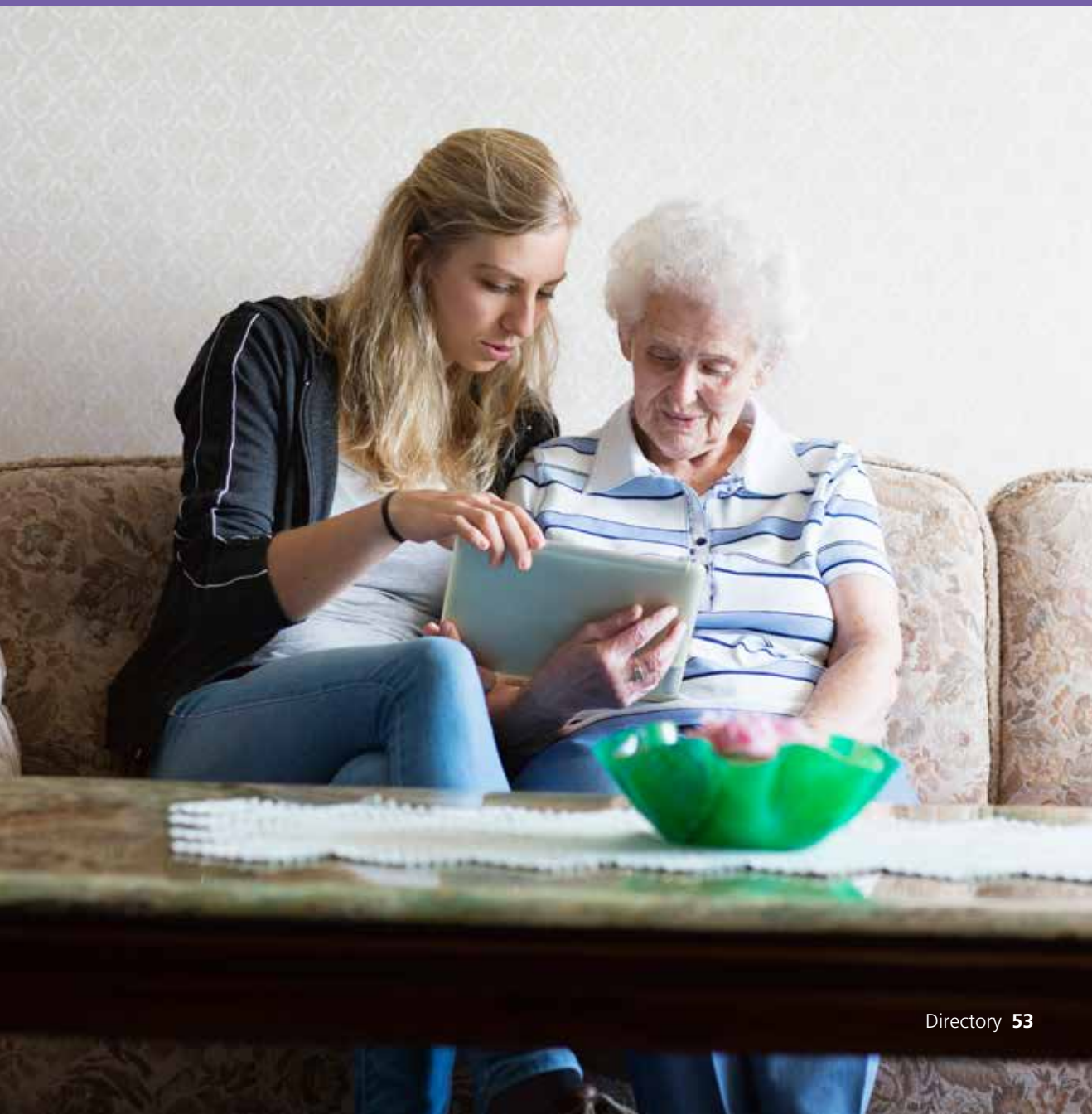


# Directory

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Contact information for some organisations talked about in this guide.

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## ACC

ACC can help if you're injured or support someone who has been injured and needs short- or long-term care. Information about ACC can be found at [acc.co.nz](http://acc.co.nz) in a range of languages. Some of ACC's printed information is also available in languages other than English.

- Visit [acc.co.nz](http://acc.co.nz)
- Call **0800 101 996**. ACC has interpreters who can help you.
- If you're Deaf, you can contact ACC on [deaf@acc.co.nz](mailto:deaf@acc.co.nz) or fax **0800 332 354**.
- ACC branches are listed in the *Government department contacts* section of the phone book.

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## accessible

accessible provides equipment and modifications throughout Auckland and Northland, on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

- Visit [accessible.co.nz](http://accessible.co.nz)
- Call **0508 001 002**

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## Carers New Zealand

Carers New Zealand is a national not for profit that provides information, learning, advice and support to family, whānau and aiga carers. It's also the Secretariat for the New Zealand Carers Alliance of over 40 national not for profits, all of whom support and provide services for family carers.

- Visit [carers.net.nz](http://carers.net.nz)
- Call **0800 777 797**

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## Disability Information or Resource Centres

Disability Information or Resource Centres are locally based. They offer advice, information and referral services.

- Visit [weka.net.nz](http://weka.net.nz)
- Call **0800 NZFDIC (0800 693 342)**
- Visit [nzfdic.org.nz/centres](http://nzfdic.org.nz/centres) to find the centre nearest you.

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## Enable New Zealand

Enable New Zealand provides equipment and modifications throughout New Zealand (with the exception of Auckland and Northland), on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

- Visit [enable.co.nz](http://enable.co.nz)
- Call **0800 362 253**

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## Family Services Directory

The Family Services Directory is an online tool that connects people with help and support. As a carer, you will find this directory useful for local support, advice or networks.

- Visit [familyservices.govt.nz/directory](http://familyservices.govt.nz/directory) to see what's available in your region.





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## Health and Disability Commissioner

The Health and Disability Commissioner's role is to promote and protect the rights of those using health and disability services.

The Health and Disability Commissioner's website has information in a range of languages.

- Visit [hdc.org.nz](http://hdc.org.nz)
- Auckland – call TTY **(09) 373 1060**
- Wellington – call **(04) 494 7900**
- Other areas – call TTY **0800 11 22 33**
- Fax **(09) 373 1061**
- Email [hdc@hdc.org.nz](mailto:hdc@hdc.org.nz)
- Write to **PO Box 1791, Auckland**

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## Inland Revenue

Information about Working for Families.

- Visit the *Individuals and families* section of [ird.govt.nz](http://ird.govt.nz)
- Call **0800 227 773** or if calling from a cellphone, call **04 978 0734**
- Deaf Link free fax **0800 447 755**

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## Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

General queries on employment, pay, holidays and leave.

- Visit [employment.govt.nz](http://employment.govt.nz)
- Call **0800 20 90 20**



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## Ministry of Education

Information about Ministry of Education funding and services:

- Talk to your child's teacher or principal
- Visit **education.govt.nz**
- Call your nearest Ministry of Education office (go to **education.govt.nz** and search for *Special education and district offices*)
- Call the special education information line **0800 622 222**
- Email **special.education@education.govt.nz**

If you already have a relationship with a Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC) organisation, you can also talk to them.

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## Ministry of Health

For information visit **health.govt.nz**

- Auckland – call **(09) 580 9000**
- Hamilton – call **(07) 929 3600**
- Wellington – call **(04) 496 2000**
- Christchurch – call **(03) 974 2040**
- Dunedin – call **(03) 474 8040**

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## Nationwide Health and Disability Consumer Advocacy Service

- Call **0800 555 050**
- Free fax **0800 2787 7678**
- Email **advocacy@hdc.org.nz**

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## Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC) Organisations or equivalent

You need an assessment from a NASC organisation or equivalent to get most health and disability support services funded by the Ministry of Health or a District Health Board.

### Younger people with chronic health conditions (generally under 65 years)

You can find a list of NASC organisations for younger disabled people. Visit the Ministry of Health website [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz) and search for *Needs assessment and service coordination services* or phone the Ministry of Health's disability number **0800 DSD MOH (0800 373 664)**.

### Younger disabled people (generally under 65 years)

You can find a list of NASC organisations for younger disabled people at the Ministry of Health website. Visit [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz) and search for *Needs assessment and service coordination services* or phone the Ministry of Health's disability number **0800 DSD MOH (0800 373 664)**.

### Older people (aged over 65 years and people aged 50–64 years who have similar needs)

You can find a list of NASC organisations for older people at [health.govt.nz](http://health.govt.nz) and search for *Support services for older people* or call your local District Health Board or your local hospital and ask to talk to the NASC team for older people.

### People with mental health, alcohol or other drug issues

Call your mental health service at your local District Health Board. Your doctor or another health professional can also tell you how to contact a NASC organisation.

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## New Zealand Carers Alliance

The New Zealand Carers Alliance is a coalition of more than 40 national non-profit organisations seeking progress for family carers. Contact through Carers NZ – [see page 54](#).

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## Office for Seniors

The Office for Seniors provides a wide range of information for seniors and those interested in seniors' issues. This includes advice on establishing an Enduring Power of Attorney and identifying and addressing social isolation.

- Visit [superseniors.msd.govt.nz](http://superseniors.msd.govt.nz)
- Visit [facebook.com/officeforseniors](https://facebook.com/officeforseniors)

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## Senior Services

### New Zealand Superannuation

For information on New Zealand Superannuation and other support available for older people.

- Visit [seniors.msd.govt.nz](http://seniors.msd.govt.nz)
- Call **0800 552 002**

### Community Services Card

- Call **0800 999 999**

### Veteran's Pension

- Call **0800 650 656**

### SuperGold Card

- Visit the SuperGold Card website: [supergold.govt.nz](http://supergold.govt.nz)
- Call **0800 254 565**.

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## StudyLink

For information about StudyLink help or to apply online for a Student Allowance, Student Loan or course-related costs: visit [studylink.govt.nz](https://www.studylink.govt.nz)

- call **0800 889 900**
- free fax: **0800 883 388**

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## Veterans' Affairs New Zealand

- Visit [veteransaffairs.mil.nz](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz)
- Call **0800 483 8372**

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## Work and Income

Often the financial support available to carers or the person you care for is provided by Work and Income. You can find out more about help available and what you need to do if you're getting a benefit or other financial support on the Work and Income website. You can also apply, make an appointment, or update some of your own details online.

Work and Income can talk with you in different languages (including Arabic, Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Māori, Samoan, Somali). Please ask if you want to speak to someone in another language.

- Visit [workandincome.govt.nz](https://www.workandincome.govt.nz)
- Visit [my.msd.govt.nz](https://www.my.msd.govt.nz)
- Call **0800 559 009**



# Other contact details

## Assistance for people who are Deaf

If you're Deaf or find it hard to talk on the phone, contact Senior Services, Studylink or Work and Income by sending a message to the Deaf Link free fax on **0800 621 621** or email **MSD\_Deaf\_Services@msd.govt.nz**

## For help in languages other than English

### Help from Work and Income

If you speak a language other than English you can call Work and Income's Multilingual Lines and speak to someone in one of ten other languages.

Language		Phone
نحن نتكلم لغتكم	Arabic	<b>0800 668 008</b>
我們說廣東話	Cantonese	<b>0800 664 004</b>
Ma Ba Lisani Shoma Suhbat Mee Numayeem	Farsi	<b>0800 996 006</b>
हम हिंदी में बोलते हैं	Hindi	<b>0800 993 003</b>
我们说普通话	Mandarin	<b>0800 661 001</b>
Ka taea e matou te korero i te reo Māori	Māori	<b>0800 662 002</b>
ਅਸੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹਾਂ	Punjabi	<b>0800 995 005</b>
Matou te tautala i lau gagana	Samoan	<b>0800 663 003</b>
Anagu afkaaga waanu ku hadalnaa	Somali	<b>0800 997 007</b>
Oku lava ke tau talanoa 'i ho'o lea	Tongan	<b>0800 669 009</b>



### Help from other Government agencies: Language Line

Language Line is a free telephone interpreting service to help you communicate with Government agencies. Language Line allows clients with little or no English to ask for a telephone interpreter. The interpreter is available only on the telephone.

To access Language Line call or visit the desired agency, ask for the language you want and wait. An interpreter is usually available within two minutes to help you talk to the agency.

For current information on agencies and more about the service:

**[language.govt.nz](http://language.govt.nz)**

### Language Line

#### Spoken languages

Māori Tongan Samoan Niuean  
Tokelauan Tuvaluan Cook Island  
Māori Myanmar Lao Thai Khmer  
Korean Vietnamese Nepali  
Cantonese Mandarin Japanese  
Croatian Bosnian Serbian  
Russian Ukrainian Spanish French  
Portuguese Kurdish Assyrian Farsi  
Dari Pashto Arabic Somali Amharic  
Tamil Sinhalese Gujarati Urdu  
Bengali Punjabi Hindi German  
Bahasa Indonesian French Filipino

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# Help and support for carers

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The New Zealand Carers Alliance is a coalition of more than 40 national non-profit organisations seeking progress for family carers.

Carers New Zealand is a national not for profit organisation providing information, advice, learning, and support for family, whānau and aiga carers. It's also the Secretariat for the New Zealand Carers Alliance.

Go to **carers.net.nz** for more information or call **0800 777 797**

This booklet is available from Work and Income **0800 559 009**, or Carers New Zealand **0800 777 797**. Order bulk copies by phoning the Carers NZ Freephone.

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



**Office for Seniors**  
Te Tari Kaumātua

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development



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