

# just. facts

“A carer is anyone who supports a person with ill health, a disability, mental illness, an addiction, or in their old age. A carer's effort, understanding and compassion enables these people to live with dignity and to participate more fully in society.”

Source: The NZ Carers' Strategy

## Carers in NZ

Growing numbers of New Zealanders will need care in the following decades. By the late 2020s it is estimated there will be over one million New Zealanders aged 65 years and over, compared with half a million in 2006. Advances in medicine mean younger people with high support needs are surviving and living longer. These young people want to be a part of their communities and will need support for a long time to help them participate as much as they can.

Despite this, support for carers is lacking. The New Zealand Disability Strategy formally recognises the needs of carers, but policies and laws tend not to focus on the carers themselves. Assistance is more likely to be directed towards the person needing the support first, with little specific consideration given to the people giving the support and their families.

Informal carers contribute to the economy, but some of them find it difficult to stay in paid work because it is hard to balance a paying job with their caring role. 54% of carers earn less than \$30,000 per annum, with the majority in part-time employment, rather than full-time. In a recent survey undertaken by the University of Auckland, two thirds of the carers interviewed had experienced depression, only 10 in 300 were able to remain in paid work, and <3% of carers of older people and <1% of carers of loved ones (parents caring for high needs children and young people) felt they were receiving adequate support.

Carers need to have choices and opportunities to participate in family life, social activities, employment and education, and have their voices heard in decision-making that affects them.

Work and Income New Zealand provides the following financial help for carers and those they care for:

- Domestic Purposes Benefit – Care of Sick or Infirm
- Sickness Benefit
- Invalid's Benefit
- Superannuation
- Disability Allowance
- Child Disability Allowance
- Assistance for hardship
- Community Services Card
- Accommodation Supplement

Other financial help for carers includes a High Use Health Card, which can be obtained from family doctors, and tax deductions and Working for Families tax credits from Inland Revenue.

### Websites:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz)  
WINZ: 0800 559 009
- [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz)  
Inland Revenue: 0800 227 773
- [www.carers.net.nz](http://www.carers.net.nz)  
Carers New Zealand
- [www.issuu.com/familycareworld](http://www.issuu.com/familycareworld)  
Family Care World Magazine
- [www.msd.govt.nz](http://www.msd.govt.nz)  
Ministry of Social Development

### Interesting Facts:

- There are currently over 420,000 carers who support someone in their family or whanau.
- The number of unpaid carers grew at a faster rate than the general population from 2001 to 2006.
- 63% of NZ carers are women.
- 36% of all NZ carers are in the 15-39 year old age group.
- 4% of carers are in the 15-18 age group.
- Only 18% of 15-18 year old carers are in full-time employment.
- Male carers are far more likely to be employed full-time; female carers more likely to be employed part-time.