

Financial support for those caring for a disabled person

(from Ministry of Health Website)

If you have an elderly family member or disabled child you care for at home and you need some time off the Ministry of Health can help fund some support (Carer support) for you.

You may be able to use this support to fund some allied health services. Talk with your local DHB Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) services or Ministry of Health NASC Lifelinks in Christchurch.

Carer Support

Carer support provides reimbursement of some of the costs of using a support person to care and support a disabled person. This means their carer can take some time out for themselves.

What Carer Support is

Carer support is a subsidy that helps you take some time out for yourself. It provides reimbursement of some of the costs of care and support for a disabled person while you have a break.

Who can get Carer Support

Carer support is available for full time carers - a full time carer is the person who provides more than four hours per day unpaid care to a disabled person, for example, the parent of a disabled child.

The number of hours or days that Carer Support is funded for depends on your needs and those of the person you are care for.

Who funds Carer Support

Carer support for people with age-related support needs, mental health and long-term medical conditions is funded by district health boards.

Carer Support for people with disabilities is funded by the Ministry of Health.

Getting Carer Support

You can be assessed by a Needs Assessment Service Coordination (NASC) organisation, or, undertake a review with you, usually after a year.

You can find out more about claiming at Carer Support Claims or by talking to your local NASC.

Tax Issues

Carer Support payments may be subject to income tax. This will depend on your individual circumstances. You may wish to seek advice regarding tax issues from the Inland Revenue Department or, if you receive a benefit, from Work and Income New Zealand.

Carer Support – funded by the Ministry of Health

The following information applies if you receive Carer Support from the Ministry of Health. Carer Support from DHB's is not affected.

You must work within your current funding allocation.

You can continue to spend your Carer Support on any disability support/service/item that:

- helps you live your life or makes your life better, **and**
- gives you a break from caring for your family member with a disability, or to provide a break for the disabled person, and
- use of funding is reasonable and cost-effective, **and**
- not funded through other funding options such as Disability Allowance. You can find out about what is reasonable for you to buy and you can find out more information below.

You cannot use your Carer Support for the following:

- paying family carers who are either a family member living with a disabled person or a parent or spouse
- illegal activities, gambling or alcohol, or
- to pay for things that are not disability supports like rent/mortgage, food, personal debt, gifts, power, regular household items etc

What people can buy with Disability Funding: Ministry of Health Purchasing Guidelines

Published online 17 April 2018

This document describes what government disability support funding (funding) can be used to buy. It is for people using:

- Enhanced Individualised Funding (EIF)
- Individualised Funding (IF)
- Choice in Community Living (CiCL)
- Enabling Good Lives (EGL) hosted personal budgets
- Flexible Respite Budgets (IF Respite and Carer Support)
- Flexible Disability Supports (FDS).



Disabled people who can make choices about how they use their funding are more likely to buy goods and services that make their lives easier and/or better. This purchasing policy aims to give disabled people as much flexibility as possible over what they can buy with government funding.

A disability support (support) is a good or a service that helps a person overcome barriers that come with having an impairment within a disabling society.

Criteria

There are four criteria that must be met to be able to use funding to help buy a disability support.

1. It helps people live their life or make their life better

The support should help people live a good life.

Each person has a different idea about what a good life is. The person's goals and aspirations for a good life should be written out in a personal plan. This can be done with help from their Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) organisation or Independent Facilitator. Personal plans should include goals such as:

- having good relationships
- maintaining or improving skills
- being able to do everyday activities at home or in the community
- the person's family/whānau being supported to continue their caring roles
- being able to live in a home of the person's own choice.

2. It is a disability support

The support:

- is only needed because the person is disabled and/or
- costs more than would be the case if the person weren't disabled and/or
- is in addition to, or complements, the goods and/or services the person would need if they didn't experience disability.

3. It is reasonable and cost-effective

Generally, the support should be 'reasonable'. Here it means that the support should cost about the same as (or less than) the market price for comparable things.

'Cost-effective' here means the best available outcome for the money spent.

It might cost more than another type of support but will help the person more, it will last longer or mean that less is spent on some other support now or in the future.

4. It is not subject to a limit or exclusion

A person should explore other funding options to help get a support. Examples of other options include:

- the Disability Allowance (from Work and Income)
- grants, charitable donations
- equipment funding (either by the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Health)
- specialist services, (eg, the Ministry of Health's Behaviour Support Services and Child Development Services)
- district health board funded therapies
- transport allowances (eg, the Total Mobility transport scheme).

In some cases, people can buy a support when funding for that support has been turned down by (or on behalf of) the responsible government agency or if waiting times are too long and the proposed support is expected to:

- achieve a person's life goal that would not otherwise be achievable and/or
- reduce disability support costs over time and/or
- reduce the risk that disability support costs will increase in the future.

The funding cannot be used for:

- paying family carers who are either a family member living with the disabled person or a parent or a spouse unless they are delivering Home and Community Support services and the disabled person has been assessed by a NASC as having high or very high needs.
- illegal activities, gambling or alcohol
- things that are not disability supports, such as health services provided by a hospital or income support.

Further help

For more help in understanding this policy, people can talk to their NASC organisation or their provider to work out if a support they want to buy meets the criteria.

See Ministry of Health Purchasing Guidelines Processes
Ministry of Health Purchasing Guidelines notes

A Guide for Carers - He Aratohu mā ngā Kaitiaki

Has a good summary of financial support available to carers

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

Reference:

See Ministry of Health Carer Support

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/types-disability-support/respice/carer-support>