

# Carer Support

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Carer support is a payment from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), intended to give disabled people's carers a break. It can be used to reimburse money you've paid for respite care, residential care, camps or activities for the disabled person, or other ways to give you some time out for yourself.

## Can I get Carer Support?

If you provide unpaid care to a disabled person for more than 4 hours per day, you are eligible for Carer Support payments.

You don't need to be doing unpaid care work every day; the amount of Carer Support funding you're eligible for will depend on how many hours of unpaid care work you do, your needs, and the needs of the disabled person. Your local Needs Assessment Service Coordinator (NASC) will be able to tell you how much you're eligible for. You will need to provide documentation about the person you support that specifies their diagnosis and provides evidence that they need support (the clinician who diagnosed the person should be able to provide this).

Due to funding restrictions, Carer Support is currently extremely difficult to access across all regions. If you are struggling to access funding that you are entitled to, talk to one of our Outreach Coordinators (a list by region is [here](#)) or have a look at our resource on self-advocacy and list of advocacy organisations [here](#).

## How do I apply?

Carer Support funds are allocated in the form of 'days', with a certain amount allocated per day. You can use this system as a daily budget, or add up all of your days to use as a total budget, depending on your needs. Your NASC will allocate your Carer Support days, and the daily rate of Carer Support funds you are eligible for. You'll then be sent a claim form in the post by the Ministry of Social Development, which you will need to fill out and send back. You can also email claim forms to [csclaims@health.govt.nz](mailto:csclaims@health.govt.nz). Once your claim is processed, you will receive a new claim form for your next claim, and so on. You can also print out the form yourself here:

<https://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Carer-Support-Claim-Form-v2.pdf>

## What can I use Carer Support funds for?

You can be reimbursed for:

- Part of the cost of a substitute carer for your person while you take a break
- Expenses that are necessary to support your person so that you can take a break
- One-off purchases of sensory items for your person (specifically, noise-cancelling headphones, tablets, weighted blankets, and/or sensory toys).

You cannot be reimbursed for:

- Self-care services like massages
- Any items to support your person that aren't specified under the sensory items point above
- Gifts, koha, or any other form of recognition for anyone who has volunteered to support you or your person
- Any travel-related costs, including food and accommodation.

If you are unsure whether something meets the criteria for Carer Support funding, your NASC will be able to help. You can also find the full purchasing rules here:

<https://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Purchasing-rules-24-April-20241.pdf>