



Findings and Recommendations











Parliamentary Working Group

Supporting unpaid and informal carers in Aotearoa New Zealand

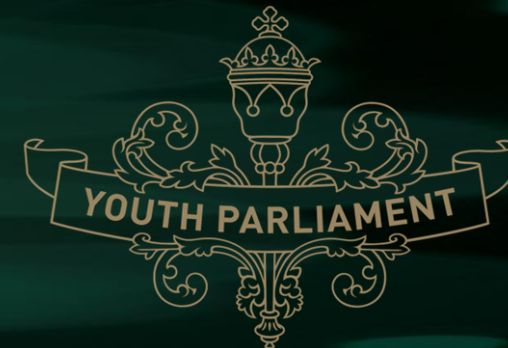
Ministry of Social Development

Members of the PWG



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Inquiry Topic



How can Aotearoa New Zealand strengthen support for informal and unpaid carers by identifying practical, short- and long-term actions that improve wellbeing, reduce financial and social barriers, and ensure carers feel visible, valued, and supported across all stages of life?

The PWG considered

- How can we ensure carers feel recognised and supported in their communities?
- How can we make sure carers are looked after too, especially when it comes to their health and wellbeing?
- How can we make it easier for carers to keep learning, working, and doing what matters to them?

Who are Informal Carers?



Informal carers are defined as individuals who provide unpaid care & support to family members, friends or neighbours who require assistance with daily living due to illness, disability or old age.

Key Characteristics:

- Unpaid & unrecognized
- Relationship based
- Regular & long time support
- Wide range of caring tasks & responsibilities
- Often isolated from social systems

Past conducted studies & research have shown that:

- Tends to be a greater number of women as carers
- Māori & Pasifika whanau usually take on significant informal care roles
- Majority of carers identify as NZ Europeans
- Largest concentration of unpaid carers live in Auckland
- Tend to have older age profile

Anyone can be a carer! Informal carers range within age, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, it is important to be able to recognize the key features which allow an individual to recognize themselves as an informal carer

What is the issue and why does it matter ?



Issues:

- Carers go unrecognized due to being unpaid, this causes difficulty in providing support and identifying informal carers who require support
- Financial & life impacts - especially within the long-term
- This leads to bad mental health and poor self-care which can lead to youth in particular going down detrimental roads in life instead of feeling comfortable and secure about the future
- Depression and severe mental illness further contributes to informal carers being less motivated to seek support for themselves, this could cause burn-out

Carers face struggle due to being unpaid, they give up time and miss out on opportunities and don't get enough rest

Due to imbalance within their lives, carers face consequences which in the long-term can significantly impact their future. For example, some grow up and struggle with financial security and face a hard time finding employment.

Why does it matter?

Because being an informal carer is such a physically and emotionally demanding task which causes wellbeing struggle and is very time costly, this prevents carers from taking up other opportunities in their lives. Supporting these carers helps contribute towards building happier communities and enables these unrecognized carers to find solutions towards solving the challenges being a carer poses.

Key findings and insights



Based on community engagement and discussions here at Parliament, the PWG has identified several key findings and insights:

Urban vs Rural

Complex Contracts

Eligibility Recognition

Wellbeing

Cultural Barrier

**Youth Organizations &
Communication**

KEY FINDINGS



Rural vs Urban Communities

- Urban areas tend to have more support & aid
- Inequality gap between urban & rural communities
- Rural lack in infrastructure

E.g. respite homes, educational facilities & awareness facilities

Rural areas more likely not exposed to gov youth support programs for carers & hence don't Recognize themselves as carers

Rural has poor public transport & connectivity, so a need for action plans which prioritise equity over equality would be a key factor of facilitating a response

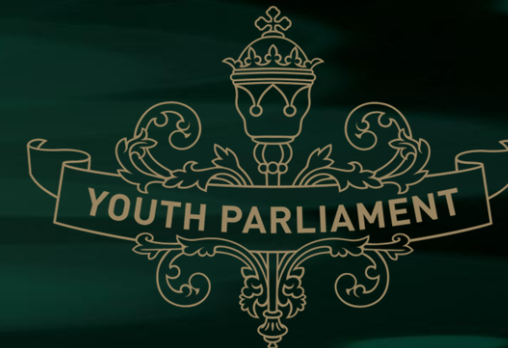
Eligibility for being a carer

- Informal carers struggle to recognize themselves as carers, as they consider it part of their life.
- This lack of recognition creates a barrier which prevents informal carers from seeking support
- Lack of awareness of what they may be eligible for when older or lack of acknowledgement of mental health struggles
- Many carers weren't aware of the support they could have received, from agencies such as Te Whatu Aru.

Cultural Barrier

- Different cultures hence some may not consider themselves carers
- Different values, beliefs - some find it a normal part of their lives based off how they grew up
- Caring = Normal, moral duty : hence belief exists that no assistance or rest periods is needed
 - This Commonly includes expectations that children will look after aging parents
- This further links back to the issue of there being a lack of awareness about support & what being a carer means
- Women expected to be primary caregivers > Less opportunities, employment etc

KEY FINDINGS



Carer Wellbeing

- Rural areas > High rates of antisocial behaviour and bad mental health, this has led to carers in these parts feeling overwhelmed
- Stress due to having a lack of balance within life, not enough time to have a break or opportunities to participate in extracurriculars
- Low attendance > Poor academic performance > High stress levels and low motivation

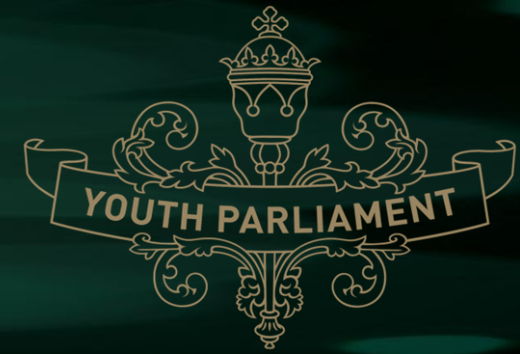
Youth Organization Access

- There have been carers facing difficulties with accessing help from Youth organizations
- Complicated, long process
- Some regions are not aware of Carer organizations such as Young Carers NZ
- No targeted support if carers aren't identified, organizations may not be considerate of each individual carer's situation
- Lack of focus on the actual carers, some regions do have youth support which usually focus more heavily on disability support instead of actual carers

Complexed Contracts

- Building on from the last key finding, one main issue within organizations is the complexed contracts
- Many expressed that they feel that contracts should be simplified
- Suggestions have been made to work with different providers across a variety of sectors to co-design more accessible pathways
- There may be pressure for young carers especially to understand technical language - lack of understanding of the legal consequences
- Lack of understanding means carers can't utilise the services available for them to the fullest

Recommendations



From the PWG's findings, the following recommendations should be considered:

One	Awareness: Identify carers within schools & GP practices, Promotion through online surveys & media nationwide campaigns, National Carer Identification strategy (through census, school enrolment or health registration) , spread the message in multiple language to achieve cultural awareness as well, work with different community groups, use of Kaupapa Maori models & others to help bring more attention in different ethnic groups
Two	Funding: Evaluation of the effectiveness of financial schemes , enhanced Individualised Funding, and Enabling Good Lives should happen. For carers and disabled people, choice cannot happen quickly enough including carers having targeted choice about breaks, how they are valued and paid, and other supports to improve their wellbeing.
Three	Enhancing Access: Have a thorough formal recognition of informal carers strategy, Mental health & wellbeing services, education support packages, youth specific respite programs, career planning & flexible opportunity to aid carers in finding labour to prevent high unemployment rates



Questions?



Thank you!