Orphan’s and Unsupported Child’s Benefit: Caregiver Engagement Report

What caregivers think about the financial and non-financial support they receive and how this can inform change

The Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people and their whānau.

Email: research@ot.govt.nz

Author: Lily Deane (Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre)

Published: March 2023

ISBN: 978-1-99-115508-5

If you need this material in a different version, please email us at research@ot.govt.nz and we will provide it for you.

Citation guidance:

This report can be referenced as Oranga Tamariki (2023). *Orphan's and Unsupported Child's Benefit: Caregiver Engagement Report.* Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children

Copyright:

Disclaimer:

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank caregivers who took the time to share their experiences and making tamariki lives better for the future. We would also like to thank Oranga Tamariki staff: Lucy Croft, Leonid Pridachin, Steve Peter, Valmai Copeland and Zara Mortimer for their involvement and collaboration on this project. Furthermore, we would like to thank Nielsen for their support facilitating the caregiver focus groups.

Contents

Executive summary

We would like to thank all caregivers that took part in the survey and focus groups. Your participation is vital for improvement and to better support you and your whānau.

Background

As part of the reform of financial assistance and support for caregivers, the Evidence Centre conducted an online survey with caregivers receiving the Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit in June 2021. In addition, in August 2021 NielsenIQ conducted five focus groups with caregivers receiving the Unsupported Child's Benefit. The focus groups were to help support the insights from the survey and to inform the next stage of reform for financial assistance and support for caregivers.

Participants

Survey participants

- **49%** of survey caregivers were Māori, **40%** were Pākehā/New Zealand European, **4%** were Pacific peoples and **4%** were Other.
- **84%** had a whānau, hapū or iwi relationship with the tamaiti they are caring for
- **36%** of caregivers were between the ages of 50-59 years
- **62%** of caregivers were looking after one tamaiti through the OB/UCB

Focus group participants

- **22** of the focus group caregivers were Māori and **14** were Pākehā/New Zealand European
- **28** had a whānau, hapū or iwi relationship with the tamaiti they are caring for
- **10** caregivers were between the ages of 50-59 years

Key findings

Information on support and entitlements

Better access to information means having clear and simple information about what caregivers are entitled to, who to go to for this, and how to ensure caregivers and tamariki get what they are entitled to

- Interactive websites and a caregiver app are potential options for supporting caregivers to have better access to the information they need
- Caregivers who have less technology experience still think it is important to have frontline staff available to help, but they must be knowledgeable[i] and empathetic.

Understanding circumstances and needs

Applying for the OB/UCB was sometimes described as a confusing and stressful experience, with caregivers often waiting long periods of time for payments to begin

- A start-up list that explains the documentation that caregivers need to provide in their applications is one option that was mentioned that could support caregivers
- Having a designated staff member help through the application process was also mentioned
- To mitigate the lack of trust between some caregivers and Oranga Tamariki, external providers could assess applications
- Caregivers want comprehensive needs assessments to be completed when tamariki arrive in their care
- Caregivers want to be checked on within six months of the assessment, with further support available should they reach out.

Delivering support to tamariki

Some caregivers felt under-prepared when the tamaiti arrived due to lack of information about their backgrounds and needs

- Caregivers suggested having a set-up check list so they know what practical items they need to purchase before tamariki arrive in their care
- The Establishment Grant and the weekly OB/UCB payments were described by some as insufficient to meet the basic needs of tamariki
- Caregivers want the School and Year Start Up Payment to cover educational costs in full
- Some caregivers suggested possible alternative payments methods (e.g., paying suppliers directly) for School and Year Start Up Payment.

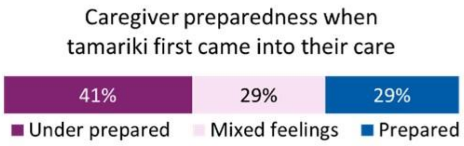
Delivering support to caregivers

Caregivers want better access to mental health services and respite

- Caregivers that had previously interacted with Oranga Tamariki said the organisation should offer support once tamariki are in their guardianship
- The main ways caregivers would like to engage in learning support would be through caregiver support groups, learning that is tailored to them and their whānau, and attending live sessions with experts or community workers
- Caregivers need specific learning opportunities on tamariki emotional/behavioural issues and trauma.

The caregiver experience

Preparation and set-up



Delays in getting set up with

Simplify the forms **x121**

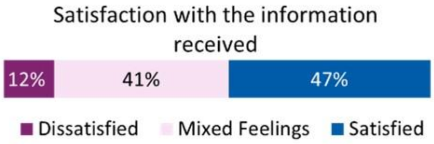
Provide more information about the

Provide better information around

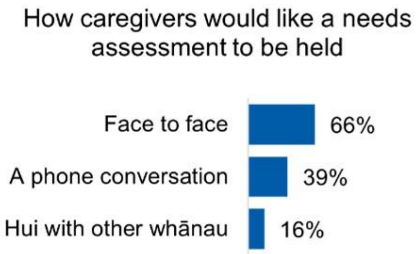
Start-up payment not sufficient **x107**

More information to help with set-up **x54**

Not set-up properly before tamaiti came **x60**



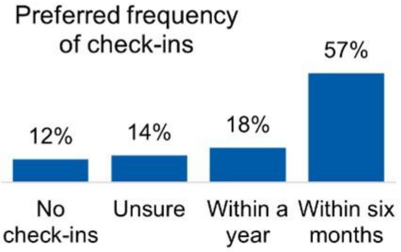
Assessments and check-ins



Oranga Tamariki should provide ongoing support **x196**

Receive support without being under the microscope **x109**

Show us respect throughout the process **x116**



Support needs

Agencies need to listen to caregivers **x150**

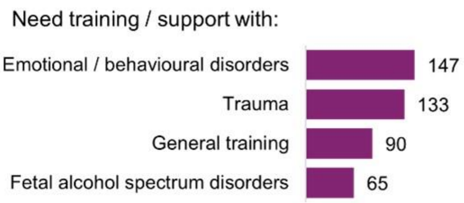
Need mental wellbeing support **x190**

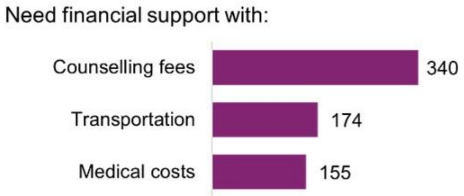
Whānau caregivers need more support **x123**

Support needs to be provided when needed **x147**

Advocate for caregivers **x138**

Provide respite **x200**





Background and purpose

In 2019, Oranga Tamariki began a review of financial assistance for caregivers receiving the Foster Care Allowance (FCA), Orphan's Benefit (OB), or the Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB). The review was intended to address issues with financial assistance for caregivers. This has resulted in some immediate additional support, including:

- A $25 increase to the weekly rates of the FCA, OB and UCB (July 2020)
- Extending eligibility for the OB/UCB to caregivers who provide care to a tamaiti for less than 12 months (July 2021)
- Extending Holiday and Birthday Allowances to OB and UCB caregivers (Holiday: December 2021 and Birthday: from 1 January 2022)
- Increasing the nappy payment by $4.84 per week for FCA caregivers to more accurately reflect the cost of nappies (April 2022)
- Incorporating the weekly nappy and standard payments, $24.84 and $10 respectively, into the rates of OB and UCB by increasing the rate of the OB/UCB by $34.84 per week for tamariki aged 0 – 4 years and by $10 per week for tamariki aged 5 years or older (April 2022).

Caregivers who receive the FCA are generally caring for tamariki within the State care system. Close to 4,000 caregivers currently receive the FCA. Those caring for tamariki outside of the State care system (receiving OB or UCB) are a key cohort forming part of this review. Currently around 13,000 caregivers receive the UCB and around 350 caregivers receive the OB.

Caregivers who receive the OB must have a tamaiti who has experienced one of the following eligibility criteria:

- natural or adopted parent(s) or stepparent have died
- parent(s) can't be found, or
- parent(s) can't look after them because of a long-term health condition or incapacity.

For the UCB, a tamaiti will have experienced events that have led to a family breakdown, where the natural or adopted parent(s) or stepparent can't care for them. Some children are referred by Oranga Tamariki, and it may have been agreed in a Family Group Conference, hui, or cultural service meeting, that there has been a family breakdown.

The survey and focus groups engaged with OB and UCB caregivers as we have less information on their needs. The insights that we have heard from OB and UCB caregivers will inform the government's work programme.

Method

Survey

As part of the consultation for the reform of financial assistance and support for caregivers, OB/UCB caregivers were invited to participate in an online or paper-based survey to share their experiences and opinions. The survey ran for two weeks and closed on June 15 2021 with **2,078** caregivers having responded.

Focus groups

NielsenIQ conducted five focus groups with caregivers receiving the UCB who had completed the survey and agreed to participate in future research. Focus groups were carried out in South Auckland, Whangarei, Rotorua, Hutt Valley and Christchurch in late July and early August 2021. A total of **36** caregivers participated across the focus groups, with six to eight in each. The focus groups lasted for 2 to 2.5 hours.

The full survey and descriptive characteristics of caregivers can be found in the appendices.

Information on support and entitlements

Key issues within the current system

- Caregivers find the systems to access support difficult to navigate
- Some caregivers are not aware of their entitlements or what their payments are intended for.

The desired outcomes sought from providing information about support and entitlements

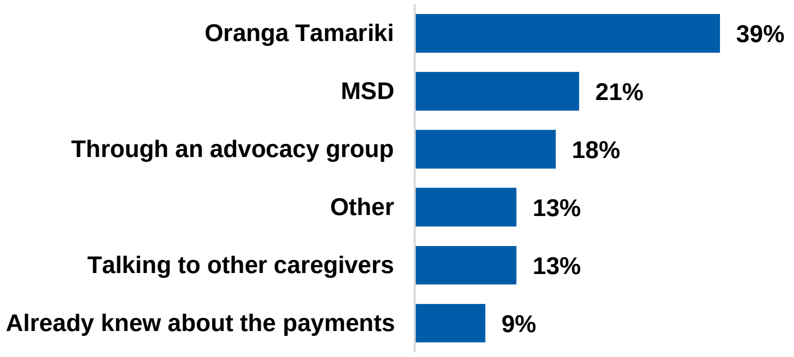
- Caregiving whānau, tamariki and potential caregivers, can easily access information on entitlements and support
- Caregivers and tamariki understand their entitlements and support
- Caregivers are confident to ask for their entitlements and support.

How caregivers access information on support and entitlements

Most caregivers first heard about the OB/UCB through Oranga Tamariki but talked to people they know for further information

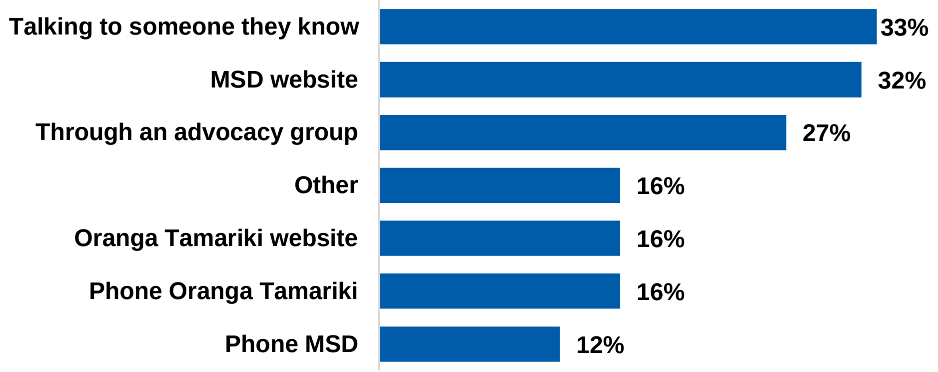
Most caregivers first heard about the OB/UCB through either Oranga Tamariki or the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) (60%). Other caregivers first heard about the benefits through advocacy groups (18%). Non-whānau caregivers were the most likely to have heard about the payments through Oranga Tamariki (57%), while whānau caregivers were the least likely (36%).

How did you first hear about the Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit? (n=1,978)



Most caregivers either talk to someone they know or look at the MSD website when trying to find out information about their caregiving roles (respectively 33% and 32%). Caregivers also go through advocacy groups (27%). Māori caregivers were most likely to talk to someone they know as their main way for finding information (37%), while non-Māori caregivers were most likely to refer to the MSD website first (31%).

Where do you go if you need to find out information about your caregiving role? (n=1,968)



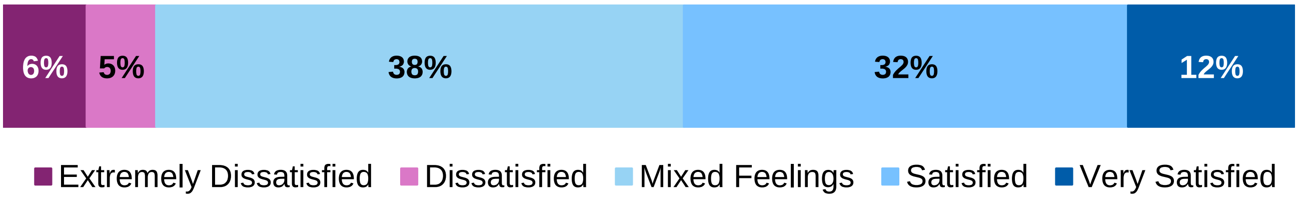
Insights from the focus groups showed that non-whānau caregivers are generally better informed than whānau caregivers. There is a more formal process for non-whānau caregivers as there is generally more time to prepare before a tamaiti comes into their care. Whānau caregivers often step up at a time of emergency and things must move quickly for the sake of the tamaiti. It means that often tamariki arrive before placements are fully organised.

> *"We seemed to have somebody who stepped us through what we had to do; it was quite well done for us." (Non-whānau, focus group participant)*

While most caregivers are satisfied with the information they receive, some find the information confusing

Caregivers are mostly satisfied with the information they receive about their caregiving role (44%). Only a small percent of caregivers is dissatisfied with the information they receive about their caregiving role (11%).

Thinking about where you go to get information on your caregiving role, overall, how satisfied are you with the information? (n=1,968)



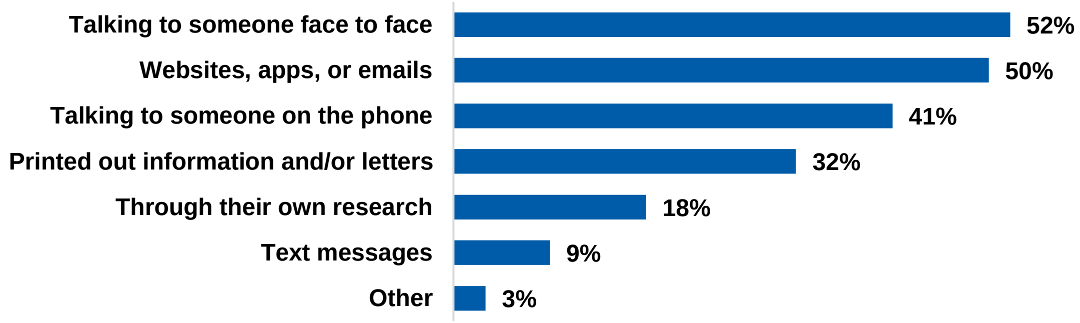
Caregivers from the focus groups shared insights into what makes the current OB/UCB information hard to follow or understand. Focus group whānau caregivers felt uninformed about what support and payments they were entitled to. This is because they feel there is a lack of information available. Some caregivers mentioned not receiving financial assistance for weeks, months, or even years.

> *"We never got any payment support from the time he was eight months until he was five. We've had no financial support. We didn't know anything about it." (Focus group participant)*

Caregivers would prefer a mixture of information sharing methods

Survey results indicate caregivers want to talk to someone face to face (52%) and have access to informative websites, apps, or emails (50%). There were no large differences across caregiver ethnicity or relationship type.

How would you most like to find out more information regarding the Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit? (n=1,928)



In the focus groups, caregivers were also asked how they would like to find out information regarding their entitlements. Insights from the focus groups support the initial findings from the survey. **A tailored interactive website** and **a caregiver app** were the preferred options as they could be a 'one-stop-shop' for caregivers looking for the information and resources they need (financial entitlements, support and links to other local services and caregivers). The caregiver app could also be a space for caregivers to connect with one another. These options also appealed most to caregivers who are comfortable with technology (mainly younger caregivers).

> *"I think the interactive website might be a bit of a go to. I'd probably do that if there was somebody I could talk to. It says it's tailored to the UCB." (Focus group participant)*

> *"They don't know what to ask or how to help, so your circle gets smaller. So, this app where you have access to other caregivers, that's great. This is the first time I've met anyone else." (Focus group participant)*

Caregivers who do not have the necessary technology or knowledge (often those who are older) still think it is important to get information from **frontline staff**. However, delivery of information through this pathway would require frontline staff to have the necessary knowledge, cultural understanding, and empathetic attitude to better equip and support caregivers. Caregivers also mentioned having agencies proactively reach out and guide them to information that is relevant to their individual situations.

> *“I like to talk to someone, and I have been treated with the utmost respect and kindness in this particular case. This time it’s been really lovely. When I’m talking to a real person, not a website, there’s a whole lot more help.” (Focus group participant)*

Understanding circumstances and needs

Key issues within the current system

- The OB/UCB system largely focuses on eligibility and processing payments, with a limited focus on the wider needs of caregivers and tamariki
- There are barriers to accessing financial assistance
- The system has limited opportunities for OB/UCB caregivers to reengage with Oranga Tamariki if they need additional support in their role
- There is not currently a consistent approach or service available to refer tamariki and their caregivers to address unmet care, protection, and wellbeing needs.

The desired outcomes

- Greater understanding of the needs of caregivers and tamariki at all points of their journey
- Caregivers and tamariki are connected to appropriate services and assistance to meet their needs and changing circumstances
- Caregiving whānau are supported to enable tamariki to thrive.

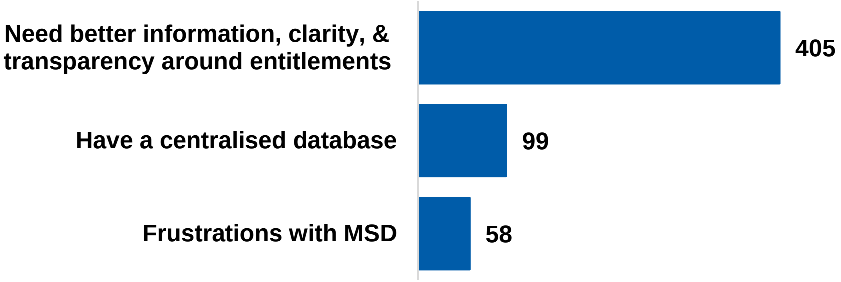
Caregivers’ experience with the OB/UCB application process

Caregivers experience confusion and delays when applying for the OB/UCB

In the survey, caregivers had the opportunity to speak to their experiences with the application and payment process for the OB/UCB. Over half the comments were about information and communication issues (54%) while other comments were about caregivers’ experience with applying for the benefit (46%).

Information and communication (n=662)

A majority of caregivers spoke of needing **better information, clarity, and transparency around entitlements (n=405).**

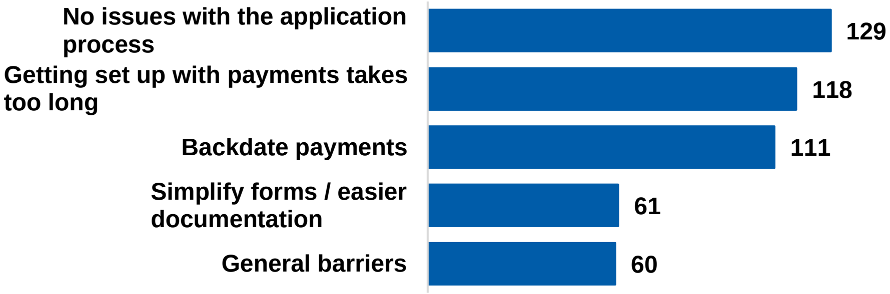


Caregivers said they need honest information about their full range of entitlements, as it has big financial implications. Knowing about entitlements would have meant less financial stress while caring for the tamaiti in their care.

> *"We had our grandson in our care for almost a year before we heard about UCB. OT seemed to not want to support us financially or emotionally." (Survey participant)*

Application process (n=554)

In the survey, 129 comments referenced no issues with the application process. However, a quarter of comments were about **delays in getting set up with benefit payments (n=118)**.



Caregivers suggested receiving a checklist or having a designated staff member support them through the application process

Every day that caregivers had to wait for payments would cause more financial and emotional stress. Delays were said to be caused by many different issues including incorrect information given by staff, applications being lost, difficulty obtaining documents (sometimes from birth parents), or through Oranga Tamariki and/or MSD not sharing information easily. Caregivers suggested having a **start-up** checklist explaining the documentation they would need would have better supported them through the application process.

> *"It was a very stressful time as we had nowhere to live, there was a few weeks' wait. I wish it could've been faster under my circumstances" (Survey participant)*

> *"The 5-week process was a long time to go without extra money and an extra mouth to feed. A food grant would of went a long way while I waited." (Survey participant)*

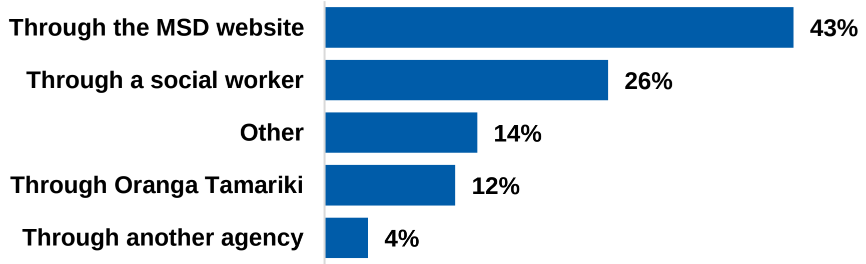
Some caregivers who participated in the focus groups also described applying for the UCB as a difficult and stressful experience. Caregivers that interacted with Oranga Tamariki would like **someone to help them apply for the UCB**. However, some caregivers explained that due to the lack of trust in Oranga Tamariki, they would prefer having external providers run assessments, with the organisation making the final decision.

> *"I think if Oranga Tamariki wasn't so broken then I would say Oranga Tamariki would help us because they should know us, they should know the child and our circumstances. Right now, I wouldn't trust Oranga Tamariki so I would probably say have an external provider." (Focus group participant)*

Caregivers want to be able to apply for the OB/UCB online

Almost half of caregivers would have liked to apply for the OB/UCB through the MSD website (43%). Māori caregivers were less likely to want to apply for the payments through the MSD website (38%). The second highest option for applying was through a social worker (26%).

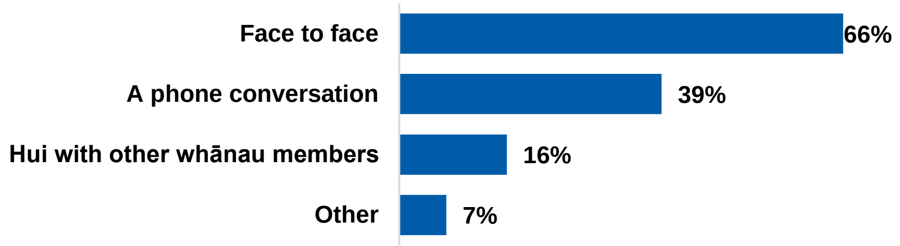
If there was another way, how would you have liked to apply for the OB/UCB? (n=1,772)



Understanding caregiver and tamaiti needs

Caregivers were asked their opinions about assessing the needs of tamariki. If caregivers wanted a needs assessment to be conducted, over half would want it to be held face to face (66%). Māori caregivers were more likely to want other whānau members to be included in the hui (23%) while non-Māori caregivers thought it was less important (9%).

If you wanted a needs assessment for tamariki in your care, how would you like this to be held? (n=1,674)

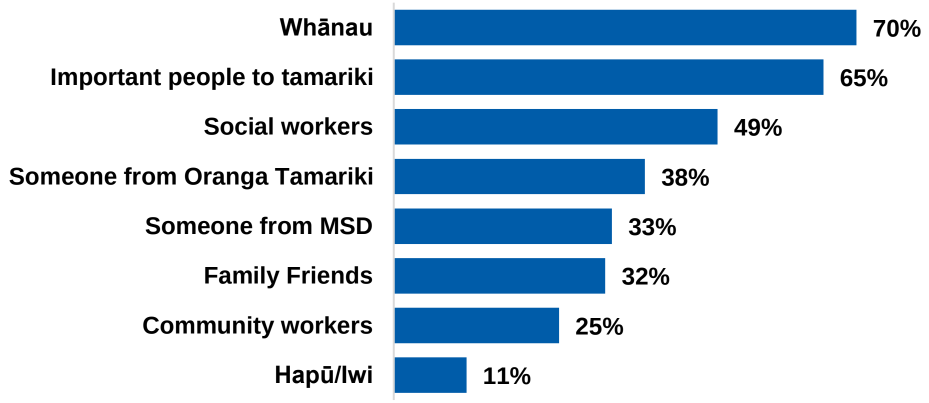


Some caregivers in the focus groups preferred a home-based assessment option, while others would prefer a familiar space like the child's school, or somewhere neutral. Caregivers do not want needs assessments to be held at an Oranga Tamariki office as this could be too stressful for caregivers and tamariki. Caregivers also suggested having assessments take place in stages, where tamariki could be included in the initial meeting and then further meetings could take place between caregivers and other members of the assessment team.

Caregivers want a range of people to be involved in a needs assessment

Caregivers think whānau and people important to tamariki should participate in a needs assessment (respectively 70% and 65%). Māori caregivers want to include other whānau members more so than non-Māori caregivers (respectively 79% and 60%). Non-whānau caregivers were also more likely to want someone from Oranga Tamariki to be present (50%).

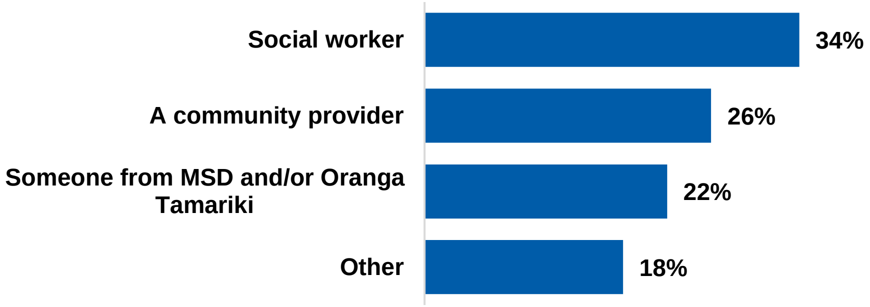
Who do you think should participate in a needs assessment? (n=1,600)



Caregivers in the focus groups also highlighted the importance of including whānau if they are going to be involved in the ongoing care of tamariki. Furthermore, caregivers from the focus groups also indicated the need for a support person like a friend, whānau member, or a kaumatua or kuia.

Caregivers would feel most comfortable with a social worker engaging and facilitating a needs assessment (34%). Non-Māori caregivers were more comfortable with a social worker facilitating a needs assessment compared to Māori caregivers (respectively 38% and 30%).

Assessing the needs of tamariki would require particular skills and expertise. Who would you feel most comfortable engaging with to undertake a needs assessment? (n=1,605)

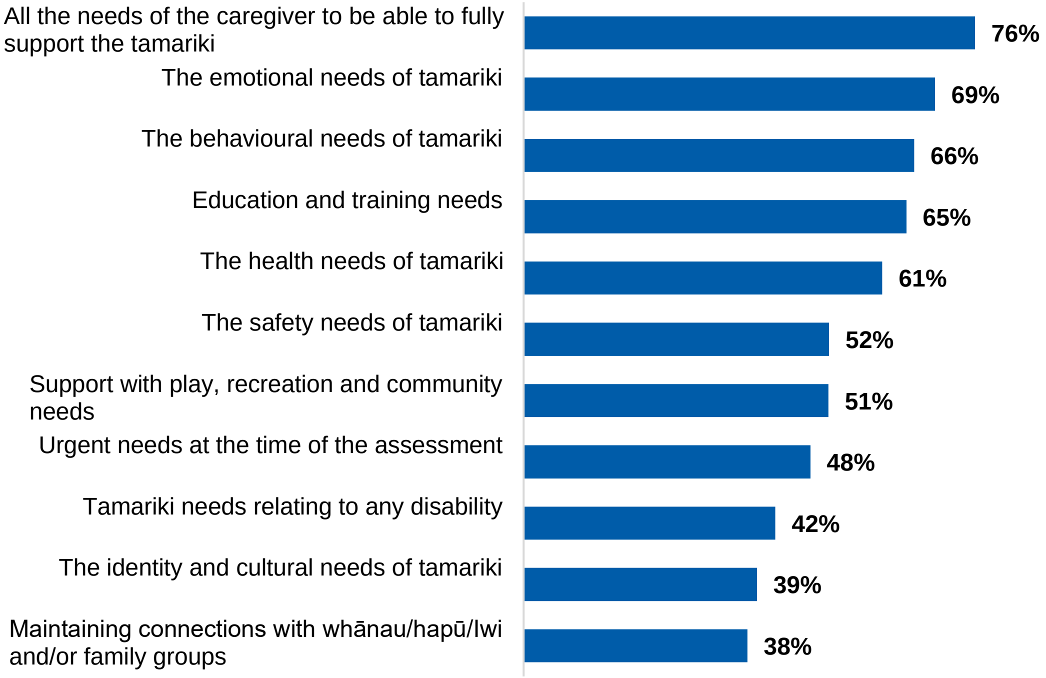


Discussions across the focus groups highlighted that caregivers expect key people to be present and/or involved in needs assessments. In general, this means having medical and legal representation as well as someone from the education sector. Depending on the caregiver’s level of trust, it may also include someone from Oranga Tamariki. This is to ensure the best outcome for tamariki.

Caregivers want a comprehensive needs assessment and check-in within six months

Caregivers want comprehensive needs assessments to identify the full range of tamariki needs and how caregivers can be supported to meet them. The top three areas caregivers want addressed are: all the needs of the caregiver (76%), the emotional needs of tamariki (69%), and the behavioural needs of tamariki (66%). Māori caregivers were more likely to want the identity and cultural needs of tamariki and maintaining connections to be discussed (respectively 52% and 48%).

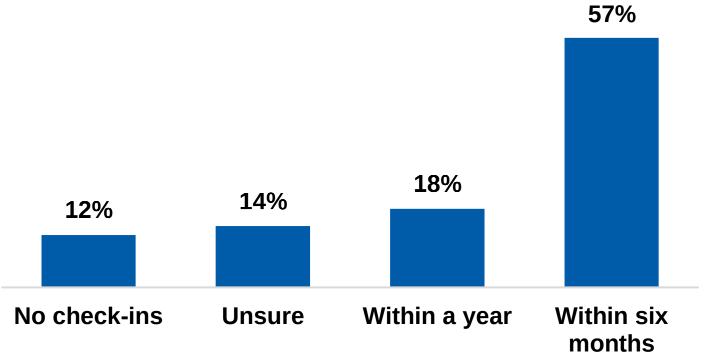
What would you like to be discussed in the needs assessment? (n=1,673)



Focus group caregivers also identified that assessments need to be undertaken in a way that ensures that tamariki are receiving all the support they need. All non-whānau caregivers in the focus groups had completed a needs assessment, while not all whānau caregivers had. Several have taken on the care of a tamaiti with very high needs, and in their views, have not received adequate support. Those who have had assessments felt that the assessment was not comprehensive and lacked adequate input from qualified professionals.

Over half of caregivers who want to have check-ins, want them to occur within six months of completing a needs assessment (57%).

Would you want a check-in to see how you are going and to see if you are getting the right support in your caregiving role? (n=1,581)



All focus group caregivers are keen to have their situation and needs reviewed periodically. The initial review should happen within the first six months of the assessment, then annually and on an as-needed basis. Caregivers think there should always be the option to ask for a review whenever they feel they need it.

Delivering support to tamariki

Key issues within the current system

- The current assistance provided at the start of a placement is insufficient
- Direct support is needed to meet the needs of tamariki, including specialist educational support, mental health support, and support for their general health conditions
- Caregivers face extra costs when connecting tamariki to their culture and whakapapa.

The desired outcomes for tamariki

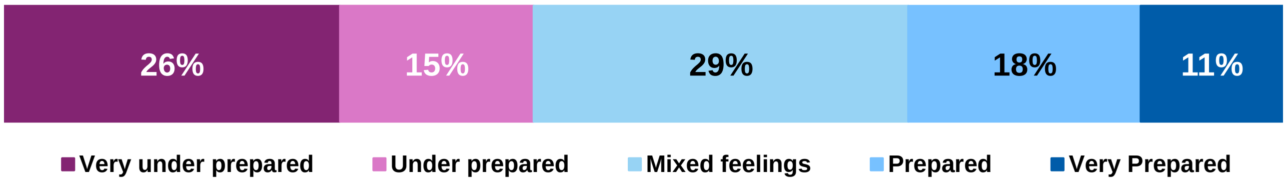
- Tamariki are better connected to their whānau (including siblings), whakapapa, and culture
- Tamariki have what they need when they enter a new care arrangement
- The needs of tamariki are better met, including their health, education, behavioural and trauma-related needs
- Tamariki have experiences like other children in the general population.

Preparedness of caring for tamariki

Caregivers do not feel prepared to care

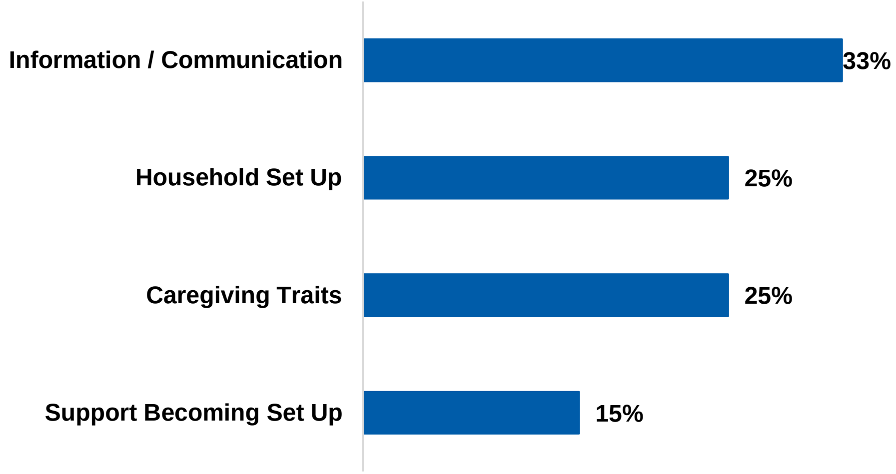
Most caregivers remember feeling under-prepared when the tamaiti first came into their care (40%). A further 29% remember feeling prepared. There were no large differences across caregiver ethnicity or relationship type.

How prepared did you feel when tamariki first came to you to be cared for? (n=1,475)



In the survey, caregivers who felt under-prepared when a tamaiti first came into their care were asked to comment on their experiences.

The table below refers to the top areas that impact caregivers' feelings of preparedness. Qualitative analysis showed that issues around information and communication (33%) and setting up their household (25%) had the biggest impact on caregivers' feelings of preparedness. 'Caregiving traits' in the table below refers to characteristics caregivers think they need to do well in their roles, like showing aroha and being understanding.



Information and communication (n=164)

Most comments were about caregivers needing better **information around the background and needs of tamariki (n=142).** Some caregivers expressed their frustration with knowing little to nothing about the tamaiti before they arrived. As a result, caregivers remember feeling overwhelmed and not prepared to meet the needs of the tamariki in their care. Comprehensive needs assessments would support caregivers in understanding the needs of the tamariki in their care.

> *"We were not given the full information about what had happened to our granddaughter. Having now requested her OT records, much of it redacted, it is clear that had we had access to those records earlier we could have helped our granddaughter better. It would have given us a better understanding of her behavioural issues." (Survey participant)*

Household set up (n=125)

Three-quarters of comments were about **caregivers not being properly set up before tamariki arrived (n=60).** Sometimes this was unavoidable due to emergency placements, but some caregivers did indicate that they could have been better guided in setting up their household. This relates to the second highest theme of not knowing what they need when setting up and **needing more information (n=54)**. Caregivers suggested creating a **'set-up check list'** to refer back to.

> *"They passed my grandchildren over the fence and walked away – never gave me single beds or bedding or any extra food for the first few weeks" (Survey participant)*

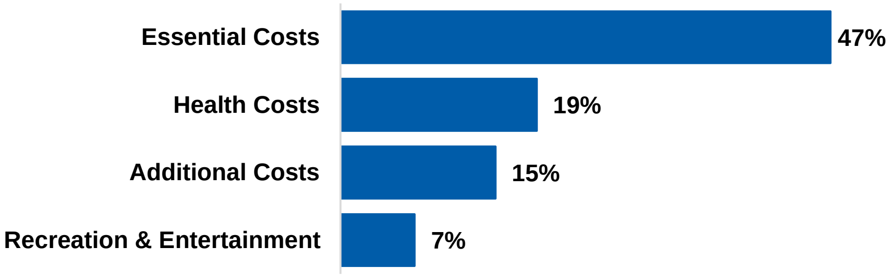
Meeting the needs of tamariki

Payments are seen as insufficient in meeting the needs of tamariki

The survey highlighted that some caregivers think payments are insufficient and not reflective of the costs involved with caring for tamariki (n=160). The Establishment Grant was described as too low, given the range of costs that caregivers face with the arrival of the tamaiti. The weekly OB/UCB payments were also described as insufficient, and the Extraordinary Care Fund was said to be hard to apply and qualify for. Caregivers from the focus groups shared similar insights and suggested that set up payments should be flexible to fit what caregivers really need.

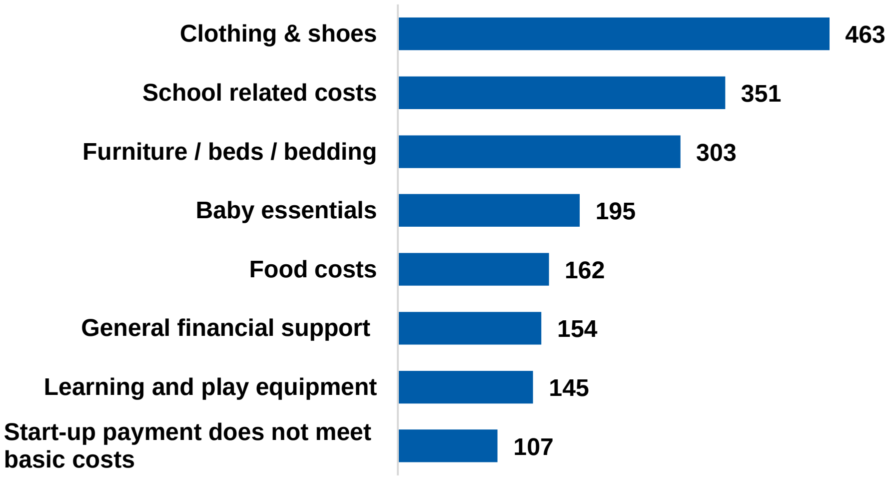
Meeting the needs of tamariki involves many costs

Almost half of comments about meeting the needs of tamariki were about their essential needs and the costs they incur (47%). A further 19% of comments spoke to the health costs for meeting the needs of tamariki.



Essential costs (n=1,900)

To meet the basic needs of tamariki, caregivers must purchase many of the items listed in the graph below. Most comments were about replacing and purchasing new **clothes and shoes (n=463)** for their tamaiti.

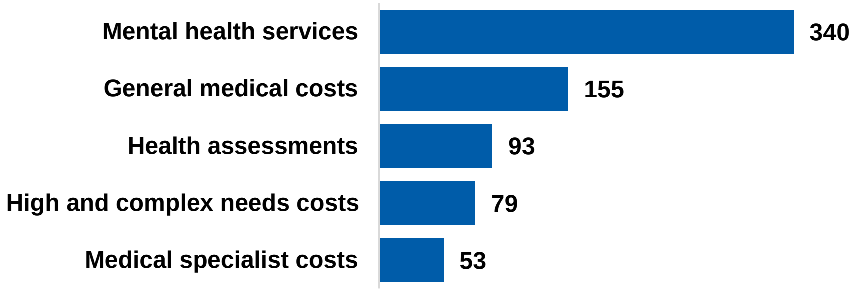


Some caregivers highlighted that they had to buy and replace the clothes that tamariki arrived with (n=463) because the clothes were either too small, worn, or limited to only a few pieces. While Oranga Tamariki provides a 4-weekly clothing allowance, caregivers explained that it does not reflect the true costs of purchasing clothing, especially when tamariki first arrive in their care. School related costs (n=351) include school fees, uniform, stationery, devices and more, which may fall at any time in the school year.

> *"The child came into my care with the clothes on his back, so needed a full wardrobe, and toiletries, as I already have children the basics were already here but there's nothing better than a new blanket and pillow to make you feel warm and safe." (Survey participant)*

Health costs (n=761)

In regard to meeting the health needs of tamariki, half of the comments were about the availability and financial costs of **mental health services for tamariki (n=340).**

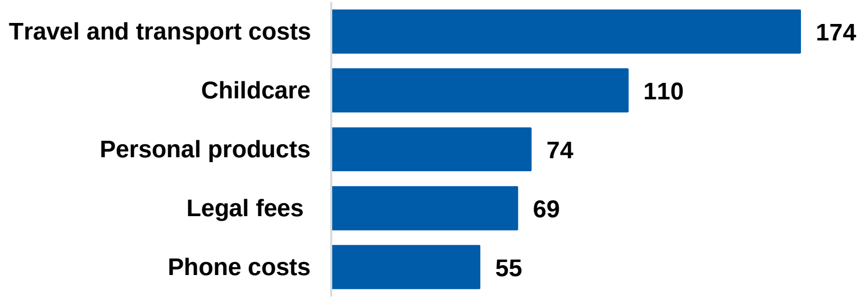


Caregivers need support in accessing mental health services for their tamariki. The most common request from survey respondents was access to counselling/therapy to help support the emotional and mental wellbeing of their tamariki. Some caregivers said they were struggling because there is a lack of services available, the wait times are too long, private counselling/therapy is too expensive, and getting tamariki to and from regular appointments is time consuming and costly.

> *"Three of my children need counselling for their emotional needs – it should not be a dragged out process. It only makes them more confused when they feel they can't express their feelings." (Survey participant)*
>
> *"Huge support around mental, the only support we get is through the school. The wait time is huge and if we want to speed it up by going private it is something that can't be afforded so impossible to reach" (Survey participant)*

Additional costs (n=601)

The highest additional cost caregivers mentioned was **travel and transport (n=174)**.



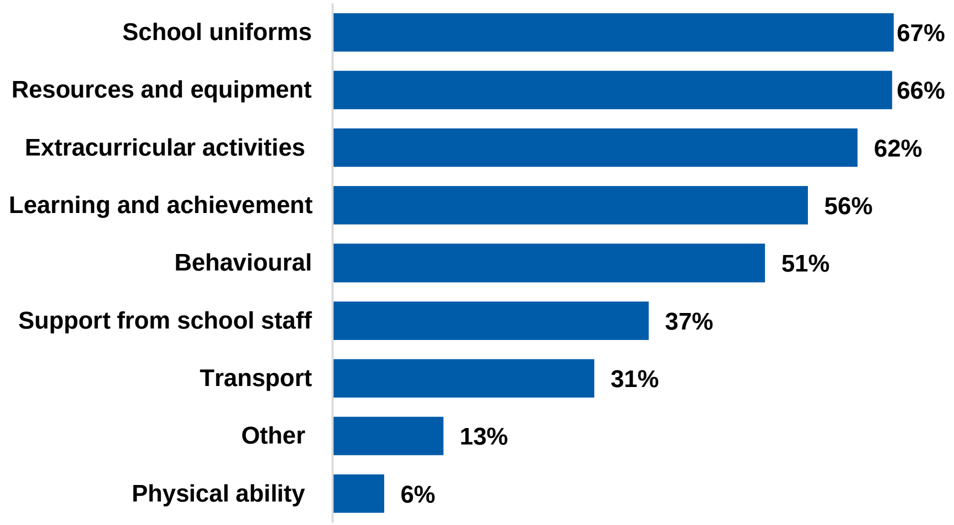
Recreation and entertainment (n=288)

Caregivers most commonly spoke about **purchasing sports and recreation equipment for the tamariki in their care (n=119).**

Caregivers require a range of support for meeting the educational needs of tamariki

In the survey, caregivers mainly need monetary support with purchasing school uniforms and equipment. However, they also need non-financial support to meet the educational needs of their tamariki. Māori caregivers were more likely to need support with purchasing school uniforms (71%), resources and equipment (72%), and transport to and from school or special lessons (38%).

If tamariki in your care need support with their formal education/childcare/schooling, which of the following is that related to? (n=1,393)



In the survey, some caregivers said they need services and support like assessing tamariki for specific learning disorders, teacher aides, extra tutoring, learning devices, and more. Some caregivers described accessing learning support as stressful because the demand for support is high, tamariki are not eligible, or because caregivers are denied financial support or cannot afford it. Caregivers highlighted how important education is to the wellbeing of their tamariki because it supports them to be successful later in life. Caregivers want their tamariki to have the resources to succeed, just like other tamariki.

> *"The costs are horrendous, just for uniform was $700. Whilst we receive the school start up, that subsidises this, and we are grateful, many families aren't so lucky. We still struggle each term and devices are needed now, for online learning" (Survey participant)*
>
> *"One of my moko that is in the care of his nana needs a Teacher Aid but that Nan has to fund it herself as he is not bad enough" (Survey participant)*

The School and Year Start Up Payment

In the focus groups, caregivers spoke directly to the School and Year Start Up Payment. The older the tamaiti and the higher the school decile rating the less likely the payment is enough. Caregivers also mentioned wanting the payment to allow tamariki to have the same opportunities as their peers, meaning it should fully cover the costs of sporting activities, camps, and other trips. Some caregivers suggested possible alternative payments methods (e.g. paying suppliers directly) for making the School and Year Start Up Payment. These suggestions would potentially remove the burden of applying for the payment or any uncertainty over whether the amount claimed is true.

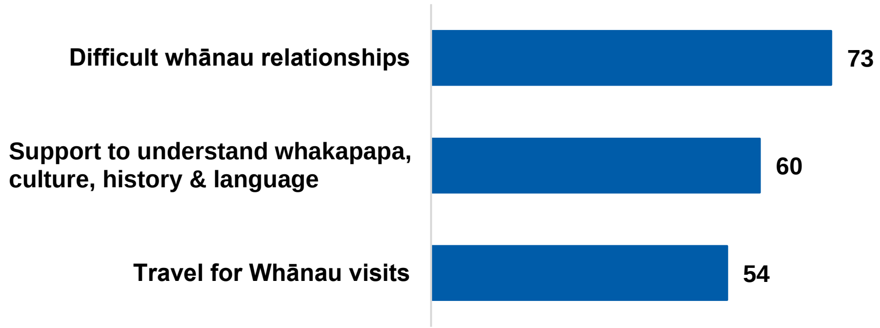
> *"It was fine when they were in primary and they didn't require uniforms, but now they're in high school and they've got to go to camp which is $150." (Focus group participant)*

> *"They want to really streamline it. You should be able to go to the school or uniform provider and not even have money come to you. Set up an account with the NZ school uniform providers where you go and it charges that." (Focus group participant)*

Supporting tamariki to connect with their whānau, their culture and participate

Whānau ora, hauora and mauri ora are considered important in meeting the needs of tamariki

Qualitative analysis showed that some caregivers would like support with helping tamariki connect with whānau and their culture.



Results from the focus groups also highlighted that caregivers value tamariki connecting with their whānau, culture and participating in things that are important to them.

Whānau ora

Overall, caregivers value payments that support tamariki to have regular whānau visits, go to significant whānau events, and visit marae or other significant places. However, contact with whānau presents a real and significant expense for caregivers, particularly costs related to transport like flights, buses, or petrol. Caregivers also usually have to accompany tamariki as they are either too young to travel alone or because tamariki have separation anxiety or are trauma-experienced.

> *"My daughter lives in Christchurch, I can't get there because she has to have supervised visits, so for me to actually get on the plane and get my granddaughter there to have time with her mother, it's unaffordable for me." (Focus group participant)*

Though caregivers think whānau ora is important for tamariki, it can be difficult if the family has unresolved tensions. Due to difficult whānau relationships, some caregivers want the support of Oranga Tamariki, while others do not. Due to a lack of trust in Oranga Tamariki, some caregivers are reluctant to have them involved because they are worried that Oranga Tamariki will take sides.

> *"They could facilitate it and fund it, but I don't know if they need their finger in the pie." (Focus group participant)*

Hauora

Caregivers want tamariki to be able to participate in things that they find important. This could include participating in sporting activities, language classes and faith-based activities. Having tamariki participate in things they are interested in would help develop their full potential and improve their long-term wellbeing.

> *"No one wants their children to miss out on anything. We want them to go to scouts, do all of that, we can't afford it." (Focus group participant)*

Mauri ora

Caregivers in the focus groups see the value in supporting tamariki to participate in cultural activities and iwi celebrations or festivals. However, some caregivers would rather Oranga Tamariki put their efforts into meeting the basic needs of tamariki, as caregivers are already providing these opportunities for their whānau.

> *"Don't get me wrong, being raised Māori is still important to me. We do whānau time at home, our waiata. But it's priorities." (Focus group participant)*

Caregivers would prefer reimbursing the costs of connecting tamariki with their whānau, culture and other activities

In the focus groups, reimbursement of costs was the preferred option for caregivers as it seems the most straightforward option. Caregivers also thought this payment method would more likely result in the full costs being paid, rather than a set amount which is likely to be inadequate. However, caregivers don't want to be left out of pocket, so reimbursements would be best paid beforehand. For some caregivers, finances are limited and having to pay upfront wouldn't be possible.

> *"I think reimbursement would be nice because you don't know what the costs will be." (Focus group participant)*
>
> *"And if you don't have the money to pay for it beforehand, what's the point?" (Focus group participant)*

Delivering support to caregivers

Caregiver support

Key issues within the current system

- Caregivers currently only receive formal support through self-referral or existing advocacy groups
- Additional needs-based support should be available to, and accessible by, caregivers
- Caregivers need support to help them care for the tamaiti, including training, support to manage behaviour, advice and assistance, emotional support, and crisis support.

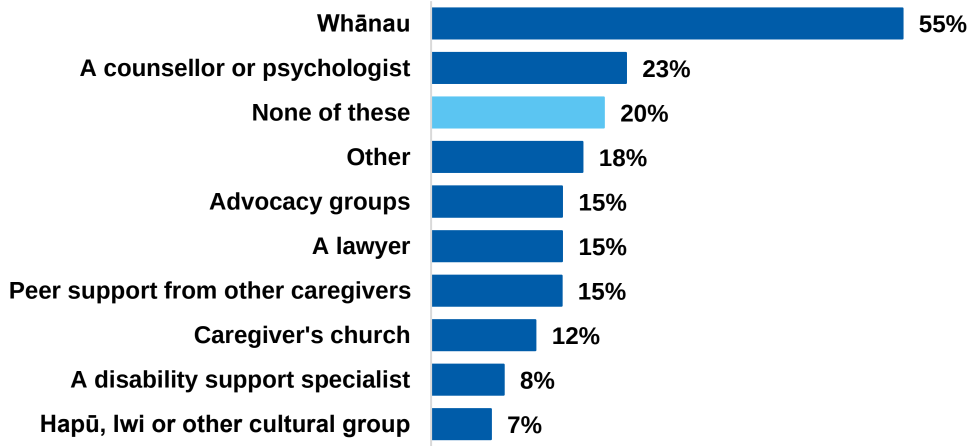
The desired outcomes for caregivers

- Caregivers are better supported to fulfil their role, including meeting the needs of the tamaiti in their care
- Caregivers understand what their role entails and what will be expected of them.

A large proportion of caregivers have not received any support in the last 12 months

In the last 12 months, over half of caregivers have relied on members of their own whānau for support (55%). Māori caregivers were more likely to have received support from their whānau (65%). Results show that 20% of caregivers have not received support from any of the options listed in the graph below. Non-Māori caregivers were the most likely to not have received support (24%). Non-whānau caregivers were also most likely to have received peer support (23%).

In the past 12 months, where have you received support from? (n=1,478)



Caregivers received support from other areas not listed above including professionals from the schools/kōhanga reo/early childhood centres that their tamariki attend (n=74), other government agencies (n=66), non-government organisations (NGOs) or community groups (n=45), and/or medical professionals (n=31).

The focus groups highlighted that caregivers feel they are not receiving the wraparound support they need to fulfil their roles. Caregiver support is considered very important, and caregivers would welcome more financial and non-financial support from Oranga Tamariki. Many caregivers are struggling, and some don't know if they will be able to continue if things do not change. Whānau caregivers in particular feel unsupported.

> *"My own children are adults and left home and I'm starting again. I had to give up full time work. The worst thing was having to uplift the boys, they just rang me and said, 'we can't make it out, you'll have to go and get them'. It was CYFs then, shocking. That's a terrible situation to put anyone in." (Focus group participant)*

Caregivers are currently relying on various NGOs for support

Focus group discussions highlighted that caregivers rely on a variety of NGOs to get the support they need. Some caregivers are relying on several different NGOs and wonder how they would manage without them. Caregivers felt that NGOs offer more support than government agencies because they provide practical support like clothes, nappies, furniture etc. Caregivers are also grateful for the emotional support that NGOs provide. Talking to empathetic people and having them offer advice means a lot to some caregivers. Some caregivers do question why NGOs are having to fill the gaps left by government agencies.

NGOs that were mentioned in focus groups include:

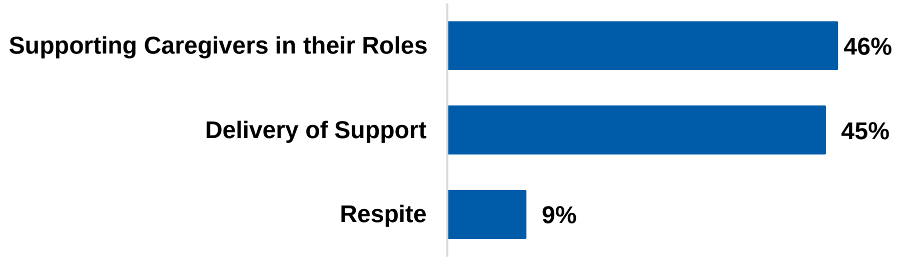
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG)
- Family Focus
- Stand for Children
- Caring for Families
- Familial Trust
- Barnardo's
- Jigsaw
- Family Works
- Strengthening Families

> *"There shouldn't be a charity giving it to us though. We rely on charities to give us what should be fundamental support." (Focus group participant)*

> *"GRG are the only ones giving out information. They are marvelous." (Focus group participant)*

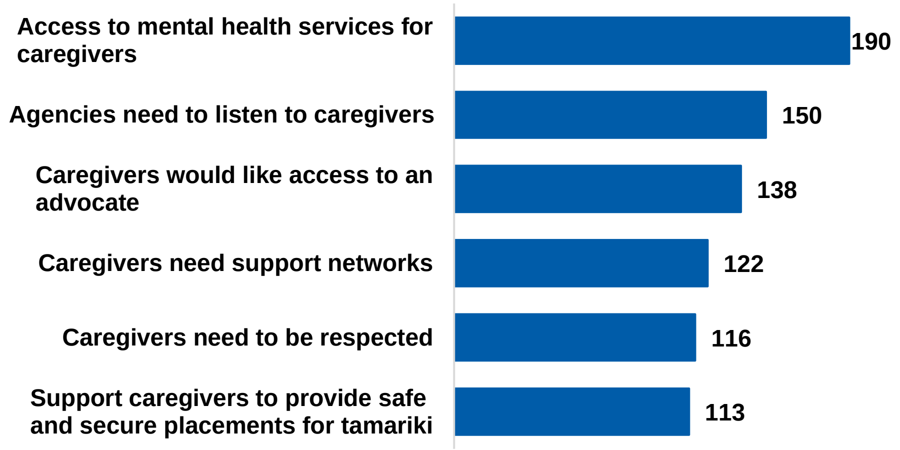
Caregivers want to be better supported in their roles and have opinions about how support could be delivered

Qualitative analysis highlighted that caregivers want better support in their roles (46%) and gave suggestions on how support could be delivered (45%).



Supporting caregivers in their roles (n=996)

In this theme, most comments were about caregivers needing to access **mental health services for themselves (n=190).**



Some caregivers said they need support with looking after their own health and wellbeing needs. Caregivers explained that they need to access mental health services for themselves (n=190) and that agencies need to listen to their requests and needs (n=150). Furthermore, caregivers want advocacy support (n=138) and access to support networks with other caregivers (n=122). Caregivers cannot be expected to care for tamariki and meet their needs if they are experiencing high levels of stress and even burn out.

> *“Caregivers mental health is paramount and can be challenging sometimes when having children in their care who have had a traumatic upbringing.” (Survey participant)*
>
> *“We had to find our own counsellors. We have had to find our way with a broken boy who didn’t understand why he doesn’t have a dad & why his mum didn’t love him enough to choose him over addiction.” (Survey participant)*

Focus groups supported survey findings that caregivers would appreciate support for themselves to help them manage their own well-being and support their tamariki. Caregivers are very keen for Oranga Tamariki to proactively connect caregivers together so they can share their experiences, swap advice, and feel less alone. At the end of each focus group session, caregivers exchanged contact details as a start to creating informal networks.

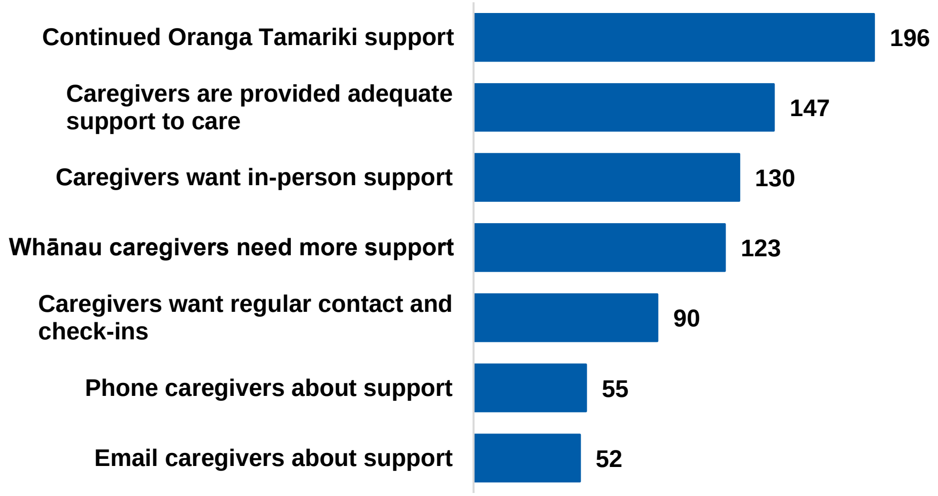
> *"I go and see my shrink so I don't need counselling, but I need peer support. I've been on my own for years with my kids, my grandkids. I've got 18 of them. I'm dealing with my kids' issues as well and it's really hard. I've got no support for me." (Focus group participant)*

Caregivers in the focus groups also mentioned other useful ways to offer support. Practical help such as housework, gardening, and mowing lawns would support caregivers and give them more time to focus on their needs and the needs of their tamariki.

> *"I want someone to come and clean my windows! I don't have time to keep my home tidy. I haven't got the energy anymore, I'm driving 40km a day." (Focus group participant)*

Delivery of support (n=997)

Below is a breakdown of subthemes relating to delivery of support based on qualitative analysis. Most comments were about caregivers wanting **Oranga Tamariki to continue to provide support** once the tamariki were in the care of caregivers (n=196).



Caregivers who had gone through Oranga Tamariki commonly described feelings of abandonment once the tamariki were in their guardianship. Caregivers want ongoing support from Oranga Tamariki (n=196), not just at the beginning when the custody of tamariki is being sorted. Caregivers also frequently mentioned wanting in-person support (n=147) to help meet the needs of tamariki and to know where to access support.

> *"The transition of the tamariki coming into my care and services offered to help, as soon as they were in my care OT closed their files and offered no help or support and left me to flounder through the processes by myself. I feel they could have done a lot more to awhi." (Survey participant)*

> *"Just having someone to talk to about things would be fine. Someone who is understanding and willing to help when needed." (Survey participant)*

Access to respite (n=200)

Survey results highlighted that a group of caregivers think respite is vital in supporting them to continue in their roles. Focus group insights shared the same sentiment. Some caregivers are calling out for respite as they are exhausted, and some are struggling to continue in their roles. Having some time out would help them to recover and put them in a better space mentally and physically to continue caring for their tamariki.

> *"I have had no respite for three years when I got two weeks. Since then, nothing. The social worker says to me 'you shouldn't need it'. I said 'do you have children?' and she says 'yes'. 'Do your children go on holidays?' she says 'yes they go to their nanny – this one or that one'. That's her respite!" (Focus group participant)*

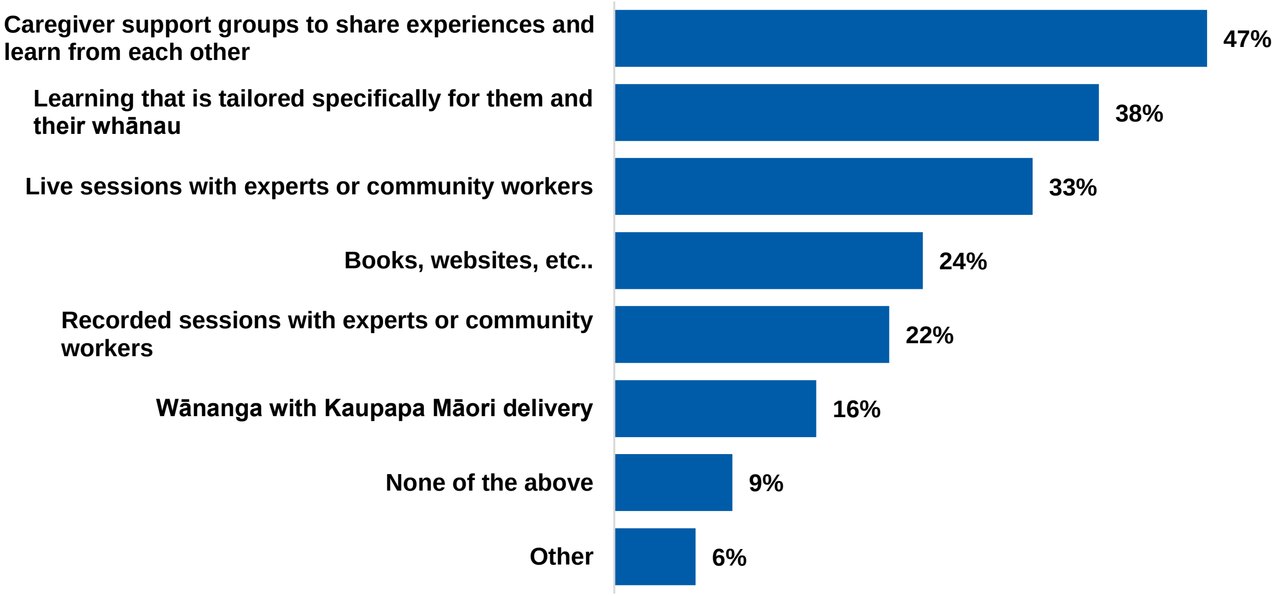
> *"My biggest thing is they should provide proper respite care so caregivers don't burn out. You can put all the money in the world into that child but it relies very often on the primary caregiver and if they're burnt out and fed up with the entire system and having to beg for this stuff – put the package in around the people who are giving the care. Give them proper respite care, have access to family holidays but more importantly when you're on that holiday as a family unit, send the family away, give those caregivers a bloody break." (Focus group participant)*

Learning and training

Caregivers want access to a range of learning methods to suit them and their whānau

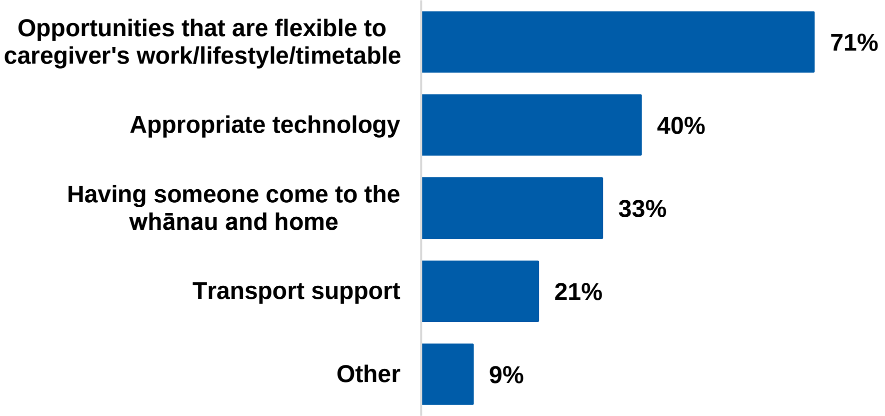
The top ways caregivers would like to engage in learning support would be through caregiver support groups (47%), learning that is tailored to them and their whānau (38%), and attending live sessions with experts or community workers (33%). Māori caregivers were most interested in wānanga with Kaupapa Māori delivery (28%).

If there was a choice, what would be the way you would most like to get learning support to help you in your caregiving role? (n=1,519)



To participate in learning opportunities, caregivers overwhelmingly need flexible options that can fit into their work, lifestyle, and timetable (71%). Caregivers also need the appropriate technology (40%). Across the areas mentioned in the graph below, Māori and whānau caregivers were the most likely to need support.

What support would you need to participate in learning support? (n=1,461)

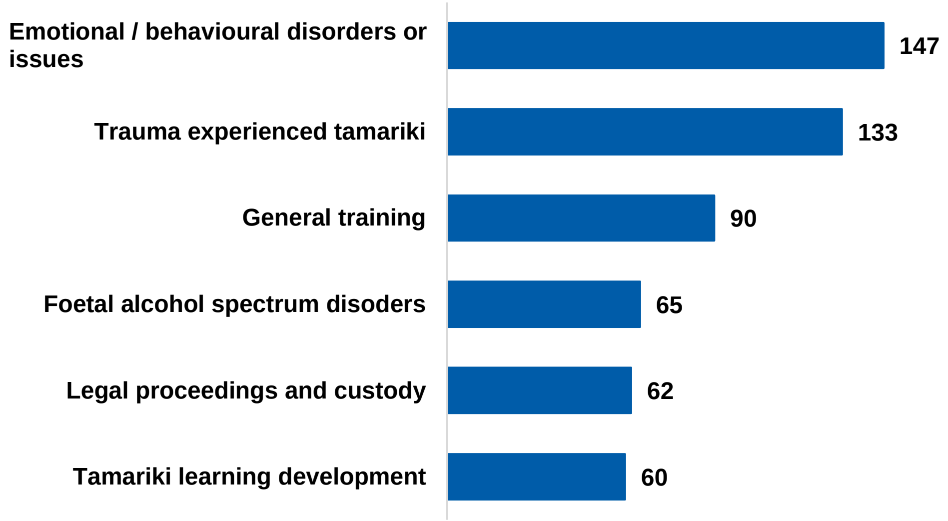


Caregivers mostly want behavioural- and trauma-related learning opportunities

Based on qualitative analysis, caregivers mentioned specific training and support services that would help them in their roles (67%), and their access to current services now (26%).

Specific training and support services (n=802)

Most comments were about caregivers wanting to learn how to better **support tamariki with emotional / behavioural disorders or issues (n=147).**



Caregivers said they need support to care for tamariki who are showcasing behavioural and emotional issues (n=147). Caregivers said that their tamariki are often disruptive in school, lash out in anger, are emotionally withdrawn, have anxiety, lack concentration and more. Caregivers describe having little to no guidance or learning, causing high levels of stress for both caregivers and their tamariki.

> *"Our son has foetal alcohol and life can be challenging at home and school… My husband and I would benefit from support from someone educating us about the condition and how we can help and support him." (Survey participant)*

> *"We have been put in the health system to determine one of the children's behavioural problems. It's such a slow process, in fact it's been at least a year and a half and still nothing, just a hearing test, and in the meantime the child is suffering, and the caregivers and other children are watching all of this unfold on a daily basis. It's very saddening." (Survey participant)*

Caregivers need support helping their trauma experienced tamariki understand their journeys and adjust to their new environments (n=133). Caregivers would like to know how to communicate and care for tamariki in safe and appropriate ways. This is because some tamariki have come to caregivers from very difficult environments and caregivers do not want to retraumatise them. Caregivers would also like support addressing trauma-related issues like separation anxiety, feelings of abandonment, and behavioural issues.

> *"People don't seem to realise, children been placed with a grandparent or caregiver arrive with so much trauma, then to top it off being taken from their parents creates separation anxiety. In this case my grandson was two when put into my care, four years later his separation anxiety is probably worse as*

> *he’s always afraid he will be taken from me. It has been a mission trying to leave him at school.” (Survey participant)*

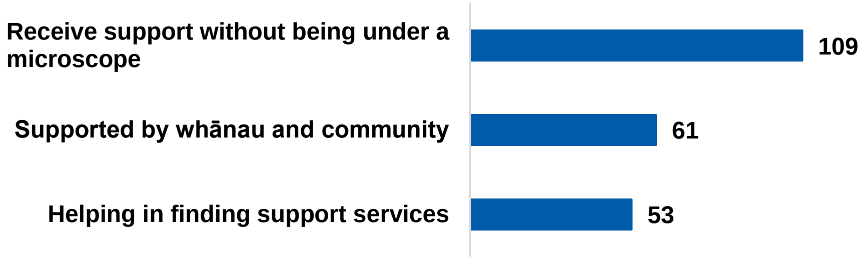
Learning support needs to be tailored to the specific needs of caregivers

The focus groups also highlighted that caregivers would like learning support to be tailored to their needs. If courses are too general or not pitched at their level of needs, caregivers think they won’t be useful.

> *“The trainings are very generally oriented and each child is different. It doesn’t actually help those who have complex needs.” (Focus group participant)*
>
> *“They’re not in-depth enough.” (Focus group participant)*

Availability of services (n=321)

A quarter of open-text comments were about **caregivers feeling under a microscope when they are asking for support (n=109)**.



The ability to find and access services can be a real issue for caregivers. Responses from the survey showed that when caregivers do reach out for help, they are sometimes met with roadblocks or judgement from MSD and/or Oranga Tamariki staff. Caregivers explained that they need to interact with quality staff who are empathetic and are fully committed to helping them find and access the best available supports and services for them and their tamariki.

> *“When seeking financial support WINZ were not helpful…It was Grandparents Raising Grandchildren that helped me not MSD or WINZ. I was interrogated and put through the mill by them. It wasn't worth the agony of seeking their help when it added to my stress.” (Survey participant)*

Conclusion

Information on support and entitlements

Insights from the survey and focus groups highlighted that caregivers hear about the OB/UCB payments through different avenues. The quality of information also varies and can be confusing for caregivers. Suggested improvements could include providing caregivers with a mixture of information sharing methods. Caregivers said that having access to an interactive website and a caregiver app would be beneficial. These methods would allow caregivers to have specific information at their fingertips and save them from searching through unnecessary information. However, knowledgeable frontline staff are still needed for caregivers who are less confident with technology.

Understanding circumstances and needs

Caregivers want a mixture of in-person and online options to help mitigate issues around lack of clarity and delays with getting set up with payments. Some caregivers want a designated staff member to guide them through their application. Another suggestion to improve the application process would be to allow applications to be done online. Caregivers also suggested having a checklist for all the documentation/information they will need to provide in their applications.

Caregivers want comprehensive needs assessments in order to fully understand the needs of tamariki and receive the right support. Needs assessments should happen immediately, and caregivers want to be checked on within six months of the assessment. Caregivers think whānau and important people to tamariki should be involved and would prefer social workers to facilitate the assessments. Caregivers want a range of areas to be discussed in assessments, including the needs of the caregiver to be able to fully support tamariki, as well as the emotional and behavioural needs of tamariki.

Delivering support to tamariki

Caregivers remember feeling under-prepared when tamariki first arrived in their care. This was usually because of issues around communication and not having their household set up in time. Caregivers said that having more information about tamariki backgrounds and needs as well as receiving a set-up checklist would have helped and made them feel better prepared to care.

Caregivers highlighted that benefit payments are insufficient in meeting even the basic needs of tamariki. This is because raising tamariki involves many costs, like clothing, schooling, health, transport, recreation, and more. Payments need to be reflective of the true costs involved with caring for tamariki. Caregivers also made comments about the School and Year Start Up Payment and suggested having automatic payments or paying suppliers directly. This would remove the burden of applying and claiming reimbursements from caregivers.

Caregivers think whānau ora, hauora and mauri ora are important in meeting the needs of tamariki. Reimbursements of costs was the preferred option for caregivers. However, reimbursements would need to be paid beforehand, as some caregivers' finances are limited and having to pay upfront is not possible for everyone.

Delivering support to caregivers

A large proportion of caregivers have not received any support in the last 12 months. This is important as caregivers want to be better supported in their roles. Caregivers said they need better access to mental health services for themselves, need to be listened to by agencies, would like access to advocacy, and would like to connect with other caregivers for support. Caregivers also want better access to respite as some are exhausted and struggling with burn out.

Another form of support that caregivers want is access to learning and training opportunities. Caregivers want to join support groups, have learning that is tailored to them and their whānau, and attend live sessions with experts or community workers. In order to participate, caregivers need learning opportunities that are flexible to their work, lifestyle, and timetable. Caregivers also need the appropriate technology and need specific training to better support tamariki who are exhibiting emotional, behavioural, and trauma-related issues.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey sample

Table 1. Proportion of respondents by benefit type

Which payment caregivers receive	N=2,078
Unsupported Child's Benefit	92%
Orphan's Benefit	6%
None / Unsure	4%

Table 2. Ethnicity of respondents

Caregiver ethnicity	N=1,428
Māori	49%
Pākeha/NZ European	40%
Pacific Peoples	4%
Other	4%
Prefer not to say	2%

Table 3. Age of respondents

Caregiver age	N=1,428
Less than 18 years	1%
18-24 years	1%
25-29 years	2%
30-39 years	11%
40-49 years	20%
50-59 years	36%
60-69 years	24%
70 years or more	5%

Table 4. Caregiver’s relationship to the child

Relationship type	N= 1,425
Whānau	83%
Non-whānau	16%
Hapū/Iwi	1%

Appendix 2: Survey content

We would like to give you the opportunity to take part in shaping the future of the financial and non-financial support available to caregivers like yourself.

Filling out this survey will help inform the government on:

- *what further changes to the financial assistance system are needed to support tamariki to thrive under the care of their whānau/family, hapū or iwi*
- *what non-financial support caregivers outside the State care system need or want*

In 2019, Oranga Tamariki heard from caregivers about the issues that affect them and the tamariki in their care, including the financial support they receive. Details of the changes that were made, based on what caregivers told us, can be found here: ***Reforming financial assistance and support for caregivers | Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children***

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.
We estimate that this survey should take you 15-20 minutes to complete, depending on how much detail you may give on some of the open questions. The survey is anonymous, so caregivers who take part won't be identified. However, they may choose to give their details if they wish to be contacted about hui being held in the next few months to discuss caregiver support.

The survey will close on ***July 15, 2021.***

If you have any problems completing the survey, please contact ***surveys@ot.govt.nz***
If you have any questions about the hui, please contact ***cgreview@ot.govt.nz***

Glossary:

- *For ease of reference, we have used the term whānau in this survey, but we are referring to all families*
- *For ease of reference, we have used the term tamariki in this survey, but we are referring to all children*
- *Ministry of Social Development (MSD)*
- *Orphan's Benefit (OB)*
- *Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB)*

Question breakdown

Type of caregiver

1. Which of the benefits listed below do you receive? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
The Unsupported Child's Benefit	92% (n=1,903)	94% (n=653)	94% (n=658)	94% (n=1,118)	94% (n=221)
The Orphan's Benefit	6% (n=119)	6% (n=43)	5% (n=38)	6% (n=71)	5% (n=11)
Unsure*	2% (n=39)	2% (n=12)	1% (n=9)	1% (n=15)	3% (n=11)

Accessing information

2. How did you first hear about the Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Oranga Tamariki told me	39% (n=778)	38% (n=263)	41% (n=289)	36% (n=430)	57% (n=134)
MSD told me	21% (n=408)	21% (n=149)	20% (n=142)	22% (n=261)	14% (n=33)
Through an advocacy group	18% (n=349)	19% (n=131)	17% (n=122)	20% (n=243)	7% (n=16)
Other	13% (n=260)	15% (n=102)	13% (n=90)	14% (n=169)	12% (n=28)
By talking to other caregivers	13% (n=258)	15% (n=97)	11% (n=77)	12% (n=146)	14% (n=33)
I already knew about the payments	9% (n=184)	11% (n=80)	7% (n=46)	10% (n=116)	6% (n=13)

3. Where do you go if you need to find out information about your caregiving role? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Talk to someone I know	33% (n=652)	37% (n=259)	27% (n=189)	33% (n=392)	30% (n=70)
MSD website	32% (n=625)	31% (n=213)	31% (n=214)	33% (n=391)	21% (n=48)
Talk to an advocacy group	27% (n=522)	26% (n=178)	31% (n=214)	30% (n=356)	21% (n=49)
Other	16% (n=320)	17% (n=115)	18% (n=125)	15% (n=179)	26% (n=60)
Oranga Tamariki website	16% (n=310)	16% (n=114)	15% (n=106)	15% (n=180)	19% (n=45)
Phone Oranga Tamariki	13% (n=253)	15% (n=105)	13% (n=88)	12% (n=140)	24% (n=56)
Phone MSD	12% (n=240)	14% (n=98)	12% (n=83)	13% (n=159)	10% (n=23)

4. Thinking about where you go to get information on your caregiving role, overall, how satisfied are you with the information you get from the areas you go to?

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Don’t know/can’t say	7% (n=142)	8% (n=57)	5% (n=32)	7% (n=79)	6% (n=13)
Extremely dissatisfied	6% (n=117)	6% (n=40)	6% (n=44)	5% (n=65)	11% (n=25)
Dissatisfied	5% (n=98)	4% (n=29)	6% (n=43)	4% (n=53)	9% (n=20)

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Mixed feelings	38% (n=751)	39% (n=271)	38% (n=265)	37% (n=445)	43% (n=101)
Satisfied	32% (n=627)	30% (n=208)	34% (n=239)	33% (n=393)	26% (n=61)
Very Satisfied	12% (n=233)	13% (n=92)	11% (n=76)	13% (n=115)	6% (n=15)

5. How could this be improved? *Please be as detailed as possible.*

   - Open-text question

6. Where would you most like to find out information regarding the Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit?

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
MSD	66% (n=1,266)	66% (n=454)	66% (n=457)	67% (n=791)	59% (n=138)
Oranga Tamariki	13% (n=248)	12% (n=80)	15% (n=104)	11% (n=131)	24% (n=55)
Advocacy groups	11% (n=219)	11% (n=77)	11% (n=79)	12% (n=143)	9% (n=20)
Other	9% (n=178)	12% (n=81)	7% (n=49)	10% (n=113)	9% (n=20)

7. How would you most like to find out more information regarding the Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit? *Please choose no more than three responses.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Talking to someone face to face	52% (n=993)	53% (n=370)	52% (n=361)	53% (n=629)	47% (n=110)
Websites, apps, or emails	50% (n=967)	50% (n=351)	51% (n=353)	51% (n=602)	51% (n=119)
Talking to someone on the phone	41% (n=781)	39% (n=274)	42% (n=292)	40% (n=477)	42% (n=99)
Printed out information and/or letters	32% (n=623)	30% (n=210)	36% (n=248)	32% (n=381)	37% (n=97)
Through their own research	18% (n=349)	21% (n=145)	14% (n=97)	18% (n=215)	13% (n=31)
Text messages	9% (n=182)	10% (n=72)	9% (n=62)	11% (n=127)	5% (n=12)
Other	3% (n=66)	4% (n=30)	2% (n=16)	4% (n=42)	3% (n=6)

The application process for the OB/UCB and understanding your needs

We are looking at the circumstances and needs of caregivers who apply for the OB/UCB and the tamariki they are caring for. Firstly, we would like to ask how you found the application process for OB/UCB.

8. The current application process for the OB/UCB is through contacting MSD and depending which payment you are applying for you may be referred for further assessment of your eligibility. Thinking back to this process, what type of support would have made the application process easier for you?

9. If there was another way, how would you have liked to apply for the OB/UCB?

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Through the MSD website	43% (n=761)	38% (n=257)	44% (n=297)	42% (n=488)	36% (n=79)
Through a social worker	26% (n=464)	27% (n=183)	28% (n=191)	26% (n=298)	36% (n=82)
Other	14% (n=255)	19% (n=127)	11% (n=72)	16% (n=180)	11% (n=26)
Through Oranga Tamariki	12% (n=219)	12% (n=80)	13% (n=89)	12% (n=139)	15% (n=34)
Through another agency	4% (n=73)	4% (n=29)	4% (n=24)	4% (n=48)	3% (n=6)

Now we would like to ask how you would like us to understand the needs of the tamariki in your care. This is also known as a needs assessment. Understanding the needs of tamariki in your care would help us to understand what support you and your tamariki may need.

10. If required, how would you like support in understanding the needs of the tamariki in your care?

- ○ Open-text question

11. If you wanted a needs assessment for tamariki in your care, how would you like this to be held? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Face to face	66% (n=1,110)	66% (n=457)	69% (n=479)	70% (n=786)	70% (n=164)
A phone conversation	39% (n=648)	40% (n=278)	37% (n=258)	38% (n=442)	44% (n=103)
Hui with other whānau members	16% (n=263)	23% (n=156)	9% (n=59)	16% (n=192)	14% (n=32)

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Not applicable	8% (n=138)	6% (n=44)	8% (n=55)	8% (n=96)	6% (n=14)
Other	7% (n=112)	8% (n=56)	6% (n=41)	7% (n=79)	7% (n=17)

12. What would you like to be discussed in the needs assessment? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
All the needs of the caregiver to be able to fully support tamariki	76% (n=1,275)	81% (n=558)	75% (n=516)	77% (n=908)	79% (n=184)
The emotional needs of tamariki	69% (n=1,162)	75% (n=520)	69% (n=474)	70% (n=826)	79% (n=185)
The behavioural needs of tamariki	66% (n=1,103)	73% (n=506)	64% (n=439)	66% (n=781)	77% (n=180)
Education and training needs	65% (n=1,081)	71% (n=494)	61% (n=421)	66% (n=776)	66% (n=154)
The health needs of tamariki	61% (n=1,013)	69% (n=475)	56% (n=386)	60% (n=711)	71% (n=166)
The safety needs of tamariki	52% (n=853)	60% (n=413)	46% (n=316)	52% (n=611)	57% (n=134)
Support with play, recreation and community needs	51% (n=861)	59% (n=407)	47% (n=324)	52% (n=617)	56% (n=131)
Urgent needs at the time of the assessment	48% (n=810)	57% (n=394)	43% (n=295)	49% (n=575)	56% (n=131)
Tamariki needs relating to any disability	42% (n=711)	50% (n=347)	37% (n=254)	42% (n=490)	53% (n=123)

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
The identity and cultural needs of tamariki	39% (n=659)	52% (n=357)	27% (n=187)	38% (n=446)	49% (n=114)
Maintaining connections with whānau, hapū and iwi, and/or family groups	38% (n=632)	48% (n=332)	29% (n=198)	37% (n=432)	46% (n=108)

13. Who do you think should participate in a needs assessment? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Whānau	70% (n=1,114)	79% (n=544)	60% (n=414)	71% (n=832)	60% (n=140)
Important people to tamariki	65% (n=1,046)	67% (n-462)	65% (n=444)	65% (n=758)	71% (n=165)
Social workers	49% (n=781)	46% (n=319)	53% (n=358)	47% (n=551)	57% (n=133)
Someone from Oranga Tamariki	38% (n=605)	40% (n=272)	38% (n=256)	40% (n=419)	50% (n=116)
Someone from MSD	33% (n=528)	33% (n=226)	32% (n=218)	32% (n=382)	30% (n=70)
Family friends	32% (n=507)	33% (n=225)	29% (n=197)	32% (n=373)	25% (n=58)
Community workers	25% (n=404)	28% (n=194)	23% (n=155)	26% (n=298)	25% (n=57)
Hapū and iwi	11% (n=180)	16% (n=107)	7% (n=47)	12% (n=136)	9% (n=21)

14. Assessing the needs of tamariki would require particular skills and expertise. Who would you feel most comfortable engaging with to undertake a needs assessment?

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Social worker	34% (n=542)	30% (n=208)	38% (n=260)	34% (n=393)	37% (n=87)
A community provider	26% (n=414)	25% (n=175)	26% (n=176)	26% (n=307)	24% (n=55)
Someone from MSD and/or Oranga Tamariki	22% (n=357)	21% (n=147)	22% (n=150)	22% (n=255)	20% (n=46)
Other	18% (n=292)	23% (n=160)	15% (n=100)	19% (n=218)	20% (n=46)

15. Would you want a check in to see how you are going and to see if you are getting the right support in your caregiving role?

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Yes, within 6 months	57% (n=895)	59% (n=406)	56% (n=392)	57% (n=673)	59% (n=138)
Yes, within a year	18% (n=278)	17% (n=116)	20% (n=138)	17% (n=200)	25% (n=59)
Unsure	14% (n=217)	13% (n=92)	14% (n=96)	14% (n=166)	11% (n=26)
No	12% (n=191)	12% (N=80)	10% (n=72)	12% (n=147)	5% (n=12)

16. What do you think is important for caregivers to be able to fully care for tamariki and keep them safe? *Please be as detailed as possible.*

- ○ Open-text question

17. If there was a choice, what would be the way you would most like to get learning support to help you in your caregiving role? *Please choose no more than three responses.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Caregiver support groups to share experiences and learn from each other	47% (n=707)	45% (n=311)	48% (n=331)	46% (n=540)	51% (n=119)
Learning that is tailored specifically for you and your whānau	38% (n=578)	41% (n=283)	35% (n=239)	38% (n=449)	36% (n=85)
Live sessions with experts or community workers	33% (n=499)	30% (n=210)	37% (n=255)	32% (n=382)	38% (n=88)
Books, websites, etc..	24% (n=368)	20% (n=139)	28% (n=197)	24% (n=283)	24% (n=56)
Recorded sessions with experts or community workers	22% (n=328)	18% (n=122)	27% (n=185)	20% (n=233)	33% (n=77)
Wānanga with Kaupapa Māori delivery	16% (n=241)	28% (n=196)	4% (n=25)	17% (n=200)	10% (n=24)
None of these	9% (n=141)	9% (n=63)	9% (n=59)	9% (n=112)	7% (n=17)
Other	6% (n=97)	7% (n=50)	6% (n=39)	7% (n=78)	6% (n=13)

18. What support would you need in order to participate in learning support? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Opportunities that are flexible to suit my work/lifestyle/timetable	71% (n=1,035)	70% (n=478)	72% (n=470)	69% (n=788)	79% (n=178)
Appropriate technology	40%	45%	34%	41%	29%

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
	(n=579)	(n=304)	(n=224)	(n=469)	(n=66)
Having someone come to my whānau home	33% (n=477)	36% (n=247)	29% (n=192)	34% (n=384)	29% (n=64)
Transport support	21% (n=308)	27% (n=185)	14% (n=94)	22% (n=250)	15% (n=33)
Other	9% (n=136)	9% (n=59)	10% (n=63)	9% (n=100)	11% (n=25)

Supporting tamariki to connect with whānau, their culture and participate in important things. We are seeking feedback on how we can better meet the whānau and cultural needs of tamariki and support them to participate in things important to them. This could include supporting whānau in:

- regular whānau visits
- significant whānau events
- visiting marae or other special places
- cultural activities
- sporting activities
- language classes
- faith/hāhi-based activities
- and iwi celebrations or festivals

19. Excluding the examples listed above, is there anything else that could help meet the whānau and cultural needs of tamariki and support them to participate?

  - ○ Open-text question

20. Thinking about how you connect tamariki to their whānau and cultural needs, how much does this cost per week?

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Up to $20 per week	19% (n=249)	11% (n=71)	27% (n=161)	16% (n=164)	35% (n=73)

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
$21-$40 per week	23% (n=298)	20% (n=127)	26% (n=153)	22% (n=229)	27% (n=56)
$41-$60 per week	18% (n=238)	18% (n=115)	19% (n=112)	20% (n=206)	11% (n=24)
$61-$80 per week	12% (n=160)	15% (n=94)	10% (n=62)	13% (n=135)	10% (n=21)
$81-100 per week	10% (n=128)	12% (n=75)	7% (n=42)	11% (n=114)	3% (n=7)
More than $100 per week	18% (n=234)	24% (n=156)	11% (n=64)	19% (n=194)	14% (n=30)

Supporting caregivers

OB/UCB currently only receive formal support through self-referral or existing advocacy groups. We would now like to ask you some questions to understand how you get support, and what may help you in accessing support

21. In the last 12 months, where have you received support from? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Whānau	55% (n=813)	65% (n=452)	45% (n=313)	57% (n=673)	45% (n=106)
A counsellor or psychologist	23% (n=336)	20% (n=136)	26% (n=184)	23% (n=269)	23% (n=54)
None of these	20% (n=298)	16% (n=112)	24% (n=171)	20% (n=241)	20% (n=47)
Other	18% (n=261)	18% (n=122)	18% (n=123)	17% (n=197)	22% (n=51)
A lawyer	15%	15%	16%	15%	19%

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
	(n=226)	(n=103)	(n=112)	(n=175)	(n=44)
Advocacy groups	15% (n=226)	16% (n=108)	15% (n=104)	15% (n=183)	16% (n=37)
Peer support from other caregivers	15% (n=225)	13% (n=87)	17% (n=119)	14% (n=161)	23% (n=54)
Their church	12% (n=180)	13% (n=88)	11% (n=80)	12% (n=137)	15% (n=36)
A disability support specialist	8% (n=125)	9% (n=60)	8% (n=55)	7% (n=86)	14% (n=32)
Hapū, iwi or other cultural group	7% (n=103)	12% (n=82)	2% (n=11)	8% (n=89)	3% (n=7)

22. How prepared did you feel when tamariki first came to you to be cared for?

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-Whānau
Very under prepared	26% (n=386)	28% (n=193)	23% (n=161)	27% (n=319)	19% (n=45)
Under prepared	15% (n=224)	15% (n=101)	16% (n=113)	15% (n=175)	19% (n=44)
Mixed feelings	29% (n=433)	27% (n=190)	32% (n=225)	30% (n=359)	27% (n=64)
Prepared	18% (n=270)	18% (n=125)	19% (n=132)	17% (n=200)	26% (n=60)
Very prepared	11% (n=162)	12% (n=84)	10% (n=67)	11% (n=132)	9% (n=22)

23. Please tell us about why you gave that response and how you think you could have been better supported.

- ○ Open-text question

We now have some questions about the financial costs for caring for tamariki. OB/UCB caregivers currently receive a $350 payment when a child comes into their care to help with set up costs. We heard in 2019 that this payment was not enough.

24. What set-up costs did you face when tamariki first came into your care?

- ○ Open-text question

25. In 2019, support needs relating to education and schooling was top of mind for many caregivers. If tamariki in your care need support with their formal education/childcare/schooling, which of the following is that related to? *Please tick all that apply.*

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
School uniforms	67% (n=927)	71% (n=475)	63% (n=425)	68% (n=779)	61% (n=139)
Resources and equipment	66% (n=924)	72% (n=481)	61% (n=411)	67% (n=768%)	62% (n=143)
Extracurricular activities	62% (n=867)	63% (n=422)	62% (n=419)	62% (n=715)	62% (n=141)
Learning and achievement	56% (n=785)	61% (n=407)	53% (n=356)	55% (n=635)	60% (n=137)
Behavioural	51% (n=714)	55% (n=370)	47% (n=322)	50% (n=579)	55% (n=125)
Support from school staff	37% (n=522)	38% (n=253)	37% (n=248)	37% (n=428)	37% (n=84)
Transport to and from school or for special lessons	31% (n=432)	38% (n=255)	24% (n=166)	32% (n=372)	24% (n=55)
Other	13% (n=183)	14% (n=97)	12% (n=82)	13% (n=145)	16% (n=36)

Answer option	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Whānau	Non-whānau
Physical ability	6% (n=95)	9% (n=59)	4% (n=25)	6% (n=71)	6% (n=13)

26. What support, if any, do you need in your caregiving role to help tamariki in your care that may be dealing with health concerns or conditions. These can include mental, emotional and physical health.

- ○ Open-text question

Caregiver demographics

Finally, we would like to know more about you, so that we can work to makes these changes work for you.

27. Which ethnic group, or groups, do you belong? *Please tick all that apply.*

- ○ Māori
- ○ Samoan
- ○ Cook Island Māori
- ○ Tongan
- ○ Niuean
- ○ Tokelauan
- ○ Fijian
- ○ Tuvaluan
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Indian
- ○ Pākehā/New Zealand European
- ○ Prefer not to say*
- ○ Other (please specify)

28. In which of the following age groups do you belong?

- ○ Less than 18 years
- ○ 18-24 years
- ○ 25-29 years
- ○ 30-39 years
- ○ 40-49 years
- ○ 50-59 years
- ○ 60-69 years
- ○ 70 years or over

29. Which of the following best describes your relationship for the tamariki in your care?

- ○ Whānau/family
- ○ Hapū/iwi
- ○ Other connection e.g., family friend

○ Other (please specify)

30. How many tamariki are you currently looking after and receiving OB/UCB for?

○ 1 tamaiti
○ 2 tamariki
○ 3 tamariki
○ 4 tamariki
○ 5 tamariki
○ More than 5 tamariki
○ None

Appendix 3: Qualitative survey code frame[1]

Main category	Subcategory	Theme	TOTAL
			9348
Financial impact of caring	**Financial pressure on household**	Extra expense of running household with extra children	102
		Cannot meet household costs/bills	16
	Career impact	Lost salary	81
		Reduced working	16
Support	**Respite**	Respite - how to access, making it accessible for more caregivers	200
	Services available	Now receiving the right support and services	42
		Not receiving support or services	43
		More services needed for rural communities	13
		Support in finding/accessing the right services	53
		Receive support from agencies without being under a microscope - stress of justification, fighting for support	109
		Have to rely on whānau and/or community support to get by	61
	Social workers	Poor social worker experience - want more visits and resource support	53
		Good social worker experience	73
		No social worker support	1
	Training / Support / Services	Building relationships / how to bond / quality time	31
		Support child's social skills and development	19
		Support with child's emotional and behaviour disorders or issues	147
		Support with intellectual disability - Autism	22
		Supporting child's learning development - teacher aid	60
		Dealing with legal issues/ courts - custody	62
		Dealing with teenagers	28
		Support provided by school and school connections	43
		Dealing with whānau issues / breakdown	10
		Support around access and contact (COCA orders)	25
		Support for the child's biological whānau e.g., rehab/training programmes/treatment	11
		Education and/or training - FASD / understanding Foetal alcohol spectrum disorders / P/meth	65
		First aid course	3
		Induction programme for new caregivers	23

---

[1] Some themes have been merged in the report

Main category	Subcategory	Theme	TOTAL
		Training - General	90
		Understanding/dealing with trauma / sexual abuse	133
		Supporting child understanding / adjustment into new placement	30
Payment level	**Basic costs**	Start-up payment did not meet basic costs	107
		Clothes/shoes - cost	463
		Food	162
		Documentation/banking costs	20
		Furniture/beds/bedding	303
		Nappies / formula / baby stuff / cot / car seat / highchair	195
		General financial support	154
		School related fees/costs uniform/tutor	351
		Toys/games/play equipment/learning activities	145
	Cost of recreation, hobbies, talents, and entertainment	School activities/ sports/ extracurricular activities/camps	91
		Leadership/Mentorship activities - Big Brother/Big Sister/Camps	21
		Sports/recreation equipment, e.g., bikes, scooters, skateboard / arts & crafts	119
		Birthday parties/ movies/ meals out/ family fun/ entertainment	57
	Cultural connection supports	Language classes	9
		General financial assistance to meet a child's cultural needs	25
		Support to understand whakapapa, culture, and history	35
		Difficult biological whānau dynamics, hard to get their information	73
		Kura kaupapa costs	4
		Kohanga reo costs	5
	Extra costs	Change of seasons / seasonal costs	11
		Clothes/shoes - quality/size	17
		Childcare/after school care/holiday programmes - during work hours	110
		Extra food/special diet	17
		Winter payment	25
		Mobile/cell phone costs / credit	55
		Other technology / internet costs/ computer, etc	43
		Personal products / items / grooming	74
		Transport costs	174
		Legal Fees - lawyer costs	69
		Extra costs - general	6
	Costs relating to biological family	Travel for whānau visits/ supervision costs/ spending time with whānau	54
		Mediation support for caregiver and biological family / whānau counselling	26

Main category	Subcategory	Theme	TOTAL
	Health costs	Counselling fees/speech therapist/play therapist/Support groups	**340**
		Dental costs / optometrist	**11**
		Medical specialist / Major health conditions	**53**
		Medical/doctors' visits / prescriptions	**155**
		Assessment for health concerns or conditions / Gateway assessment	**93**
		Cost of high needs / speciality equipment	**79**
		Physical therapy - occupational / sensory	**10**
		Financial assistance for health and wellbeing	**20**
	Housing / Location / Car	Bigger house/extensions/more rent	**91**
		Housing - general	**39**
		Car	**1**
	Moving to permanency	PCSS experience	**17**
		Poor support entering permanency	**11**
		Declined / not eligible for extra funding - ECF / food grant	**13**
		Not receiving UCB in the first year	**23**
	Payments	Payment covers the basics	**4**
		OB/UCB payment not enough	**60**
		Extra financial support not enough - disability benefit	**3**
		Not receiving financial support/ did not receive financial support - Start up grant	**18**
Payment process and mechanism	**Application process**	General barriers, the whole process is burdensome/confusing	**60**
		Simplify forms / fewer forms /easier documentation etc	**61**
		Family breakdown criteria - stress having to prove parents unable to care	**13**
		Oranga Tamariki support for application helps/ would help	**39**
		Extra ordinary care fund issues: hard to apply for/ burdensome process/ not enough	**8**
		No problems with application process	**129**
		Have payments operate from day 1 / Backdate payments to date of submission	**62**
		Income testing/ Asset testing	**15**
		Initial set-up funding available immediately/ support available as soon as it is needed	**49**
	Information / communication	Better consistency around messaging	**35**
		Better communication on information about how payment is progressing	**22**
		Website hard to navigate	**8**
		More information about UCB/OB	**34**

Main category	Subcategory	Theme	TOTAL
		Better information about other agencies to contact for support	**18**
		Better information / clarity / transparency /explanation around entitlements	**349**
		Communication breakdown, notes or information is lost	**39**
		Issues with MSD - interagency comms, WINZ not helpful, etc	**58**
		Centralised database to consolidate information from many sources into one to avoid having to provide it again and again	**99**
	Payments	Delays in getting set up with benefits ,or process takes too long	**118**
Preparedness to care	**Emergency Placements**	Under prepared because it was an emergency placement or sudden parental death	**7**
	Help / support through processes	Was not supported by Oranga Tamariki and/or MSD when child first came into care	**47**
		Quality staff to support caregivers	**27**
	Caregiver traits to care for child	Consistency of care	**7**
		Loving towards child	**118**
	Information / communication	Information about the child's needs so that caregivers can plan and prepare/ child's plan review for new needs	**142**
		Better communication / notification on placement - unexpectant / back n forth / removed from caregiver	**22**
	Assistance and set up	We're not set up properly before child came - bedding/clothing/toys etc. / had to replace what the child did come with	**60**
		More information for caregivers at the start of care to set-up e.g., tick box list	**54**
		Struggle getting child set up - enrolled in school	**11**
Support to care	**Delivery of support**	In-person support, someone to explain processes, good if one person not numerous	**130**
		Consistent follow-up and communication with caregivers	**32**
		Email caregivers about support/more online processes	**52**
		Send paper-based documents/ leaflet to caregivers about support	**17**
		Support needs to be provided when need / available when needed	**147**
		Through a Māori provider	**11**
		Caregivers and tamariki should be included in decision making	**11**
		whānau caregivers need more support	**35**
		whānau caregivers need more support	**123**
		Phone caregivers about supports	**55**
		Provided adequate support to care	**90**

Main category	Subcategory	Theme	TOTAL
		Oranga Tamariki should provide support - not just close the case asap	**196**
		Support delivered through external providers	**42**
		Regular contact about support / check ins	**56**
	Caregiver support to care for children	Caregiver support network	**122**
		Caregivers require more support due to disability and/or are older	**11**
		Caregiver needs to provide a safe and secure place for the child	**113**
		Caregivers need mental health support to get a break from children / continuing to support children	**190**
		Caregivers should support children in their care to connect with their whānau	**21**
		Caregivers want to feel respected for the work they are doing, want to be shown respect through the process	**116**
		Support for caregivers to embrace their child's culture and help support their cultural journey	**13**
		Agencies need to listen to caregivers to support them	**150**
		Caregiver advocate	**138**
		Resilience - doing the best they can / doing things right / keeping tamariki with whānau	**40**

Appendix 4: Focus group sample

Profiling the group participants						
Location	**TOTAL**	**Whangarei**	**South Auckland**	**Rotorua**	**Upper Hutt**	**Christchurch**
Date		28 July	29 July	2 August	3 August	5 August
Age group						
40-44 years	2	1	1	0	0	0
45-49 years	4	1	0	0	2	1
50-54 years	8	0	2	4	0	2
55-59 years	10	1	2	1	3	3
50-59 years	2	1	0	0	1	0
60-69 years	7	2	1	2	0	2
70 years plus	3	2	0	0	1	0
Ethnicity						
Māori	22	5	4	7	3	3
Pakeha	14	3	2	0	4	5
Whānau status						
Whānau	28	7	4	7	4	6
Non-whānau	8	1	2	0	3	2
