



## Recognise the essential care and support we provide across Aotearoa

Care and support workers help people live in their own homes, providing a wide range of support activities largely focused on personal care and support (such as assistance with showers and medical care), sometimes including elements of household management.

They are the eyes in the home, identifying aspects within the home that affect health outcomes, together with mental/spiritual wellbeing, and changes in physical health. This allows our workforce to apply an integrated wraparound whānau ora approach to service delivery.

Although clients of community support are generally older people they can vary in age from the young through the life course, and require rehabilitation from injury, assistance in managing their long term conditions, disability support, or palliative care for example.

This is a significant part of Aotearoa's health sector, with community support services provided to well over 100,000 New Zealanders every year.

The community support workforce comprises approximately 18,500 support workers and 750 nurses, with the majority being female.



## Enable services to meet the complex and varied needs of the clients we serve

Little knowledge, at a national level, is known about the composition of our workforce, the capability, the diversity and how it is being deployed.

Lack of comprehensive workforce data, and analytical commentary on a regular basis, is an impediment to effective workforce planning, and will continue to inhibit the sector to meet the changing demands on our workforce and the physical and cultural needs of our clients.

It is essential our home and community care providers have better systems and technology. We need to drive the development of a coherent national workforce dataset, which has been highlighted in many past reviews and reports, with little tangible action to date.

To do this, a shared responsibility for ongoing investment and development is needed to ensure improved data and information for the sector and for funders, and to ensure te ao Māori concepts are a central focus to informing delivery of high quality care for the clients and the whānau we serve.



## Act to ensure long term sustainability of the home and community care sector

Ongoing, open and transparent dialogue between all parties is needed to agree a way forward and to co-design a long-term commissioning approach for a more integrated service and costing model.

Establishing consistent and standardised service specifications, shared goals, outcomes, measures and data, aligned to a te ao Māori framework, will maximise governance, benchmarking and inform cultural safety and ongoing quality improvement.

A quality and improvement framework, to complement Ngā Paerewa Health and Disability Services Standard, will ensure high quality care that is achievable and balanced with managing costs.

This will ensure the sustainability of the sector and improved equitable access, experience of care and outcomes for our clients.



## Invest to recruit, retain and develop our workforce

Support staff recruitment and retention remains an area of significant concern across the sector. Latest estimates show vacancies for care and support workers in Aotearoa sit close to 2,500.

While we recognise and value our workforce, and their tremendous commitment, it is traditionally an invisible workforce and is generally considered low paid, under-valued and not recognised or well understood within the wider health and disability sector.

This can lead to a negative perception attached to the sector, causing it to be an unappealing career choice or place to work, especially to our younger people.

National effort must be given to valuing this sector, concluding pay equity and pay parity initiatives, profiling career pathways and strengthening the national qualification structure.

Attracting and retaining a more diverse, culturally aware workforce is particularly important from a whānau voice perspective. With appropriate training and development, our workforce can help to identify changes in health needs of the client and whānau from a Te Whare Tapa Wha perspective.