

Guidance for Health New Zealand for processing Carer Support claims from 1 April 2026

The purpose of Carer Support is to enable full-time carers to have a break from their caring role. Carer Support may be used to purchase items or supports, as well as contribute to the costs of engaging a support person, so carers can have a break.

Access to Carer Support is through the local Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) organisation or Enabling Good Lives (EGL) site [[How to access Carer Support | Disability Support Services](#)].

This guidance applies to Health New Zealand staff responsible for processing Disability Support Services (DSS)-funded Carer Support payments. It does not provide guidance on assessment or approval decisions.

A new Purchasing Operational Policy is effective from 1 April 2026

From 1 April 2026, the Disability Support Services Purchasing Operational Policy replaces the March 2024 purchasing guidelines [[1-April-2026-Purchasing-Operational-Policy-v2.pdf](#)].

This document provides information to support the Health New Zealand Carer Support Payment Team (the Payment Team) to process DSS-funded Carer Support claims.

What is changing? [Managing flexible funding from 1 April | Disability Support Services](#)

From 1 April 2026, people with DSS-funded Carer Support will have more flexibility to purchase items and supports that enable them to take a break from their caring responsibilities.

There are still some things that DSS funding can never be used for. These are drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gambling or illegal activities.

There will be some types of support that will require prior approval from the carer's NASC or EGL site. It is the carer's responsibility to ensure they have obtained prior approval before they submit a claim to the Payment Team to process.

Prior approval

The following types of support require the carer to obtain prior approval from their NASC or EGL site before using the funding for:

- equipment
- complementary therapies
- purchase of one-off items valued above \$1,500
- overseas travel

- repeat purchase of items of a similar nature or intent, before the expected life of a previously purchased item has expired.

There is no expectation that the Payment Team is responsible for assessing the nature of the claim in relation to prior approval.

If the carer is making a claim for an item or support requiring prior approval, they should provide documentation of the decision, along with the Carer Support Claim Form and any receipts or invoices.

Documentation of the decision for prior approval may include an email, letter, or other written record from the NASC or EGL site that clearly identifies the approved item or support.

As this is a new step, it may take some time to embed this practice.

If a carer purchases an item costing more than \$1,500 and claims only up to \$1,500 from DSS (covering the remaining cost themselves), prior approval is not required.

Processing Carer Support claims

The Payments Team is only responsible for confirming that prior approval documentation has been provided where required, not for assessing whether the approval should have been granted.

If the carer is making a claim for a purchase that requires prior approval, they should seek approval from their NASC or EGL site and include a copy of this in the Carer Support Claim Form, along with the receipts.

Before processing a claim for payment, the Payment Team need to ensure receipts for the previous claim paid have been received. This is to meet audit and compliance requirements.

Quick Reference: Claim Processing Steps

1. Check all required information, including receipts, is included in the claim.
2. Check that receipts from the previous claim paid have been provided.
3. Check if prior approval was required and obtained from the NASC or EGL site and, if required, written confirmation from the NASC or EGL site is included in the claim.
4. Validate invoice documentation.
5. Record in the comments section of CPS the item(s) and the cost.
6. Approve for payment if all criteria are met, or decline with the reasons, along with a suggestion the claimant discusses the concerns with the NASC.

To discuss any issues or concerns, please contact info@disabilitysupport.govt.nz.