

Caregiver travel costs – fact sheet and scenarios

Travel costs

We know that being a caregiver can involve a fair amount of travel. This fact sheet gives you useful information about what you can expect to be paid for travel costs relating to children and young people in your care, who are in the care or custody of the Oranga Tamariki chief executive.

We've also given you some examples to clarify how it works in day-to-day life. If you have any questions about travel costs relating to children and young people in your care, including caregiver training, please talk with your caregiver social worker or the social worker for the child or young person in your care.

Up to 40 kilometres per week

40 kilometres (km) of travel costs per week are included in your foster care allowance for each child or young person in your care.

If you're transporting more than one child or young person in your care, additional financial support is provided once you've exceeded the combined kilometres funded by your foster care allowance. For example, if you're receiving a foster care allowance for 3 children or young people, you'll receive additional financial support for travel when it exceeds 120 km per week.

With prior approval, Oranga Tamariki will provide additional financial support for travel exceeding 40 km per week for education, health or extracurricular activities.

40 kilometres to 140 kilometres

Financial support for up to an additional 100 km per week is paid at the current Inland Revenue tier one kilometre rate for claiming vehicle expenses. You'll need to have the prior approval of the site manager before additional financial support for travel over 40 km, relating to children and young people in your care, can be paid.

[Kilometre rates 2023–2024 | ird.govt.nz](https://ird.govt.nz)

Over 140 kilometres

Financial support for travel exceeding 140 km per week will be paid at 30 cents per kilometre. You'll need to have the prior approval of the site manager before additional financial support for travel over 140 km, relating to children and young people in your care, can be paid.

One off or infrequent long-distance travel

If you're travelling a significant distance relating to children and young people in your care, additional financial support will be paid at a rate of \$47 per day of travel plus fuel. You'll need to have the prior approval of the site manager before additional financial support for longer distance travel, relating to children and young people in your care, can be paid. Fuel costs will be paid at 30 cents per kilometre. These can be estimated and paid in advance. Fuel costs should be discussed with the child or young person's social worker and will need to be approved by the site manager.

Questions and answers

How will travel costs be paid to me?

40 km of travel costs per week will be paid as part of your foster care allowance. Regular additional financial support may be paid as part of your foster care allowance, as a separate payment into your bank account, by way of fuel vouchers, or we may reimburse you when we receive a claim from you. You and your social worker can work out what works best for you and the type of additional financial support you require. We expect a claim for reimbursement will be processed within 10 working days from the time the claim is made.

What will happen about travel costs at the time a child or young person comes to live with me?

You can expect that your caregiver social worker, and the child or young person's social worker, will talk with you about financial support for the child or young person. If it's agreed that the child or young person's needs will regularly require travel in excess of the 40 km per week funded in the foster care allowance, an assessment of anticipated costs will be made, and the social worker will seek approval from the site manager for additional travel costs. Your caregiver social worker or the child or young person's social worker will confirm with you when additional travel costs have been approved.

What if the social worker agrees additional support is needed and I hear nothing. Is the additional financial support approved?

No. The site manager is required to approve additional financial support costs. If you're uncertain, you'll need to make contact with your caregiver social worker, or the child or young person's social worker, so they can check whether approval has been given.

I'm out doing household errands and collect the prescription for a child in my care. Can I get additional travel costs if I'm already over 40 km?

No. All additional financial support for travel (over 40 km) must have prior approval from the site manager.

If I live in a rural area, what happens with a regular long-distance trip such as taking a young person to a counselling appointment?

With prior agreement, longer trips are paid at the current Inland Revenue tier one kilometre rate for the first 100 km over 40 km (the first 40 km is funded in the foster care allowance) and 30 cents per kilometre for kilometres over 140 km.

I had a child in my care, but he has left. I was doing an extra 120 km of travel, which was funded. I'm still receiving these payments. Is this right?

No, you should inform your social worker of this overpayment immediately.

I'm taking care of two children who are not siblings. They are both enrolled in the same school, and travel to and from school is over 80 km of travel each week. Am I paid additional travel for each child?

No, if you're exceeding the combined total of 80 km per week, the additional financial support to cover the extra kilometres will be split between the children. You'll need approval from the site manager.

What happens if we have an agreement for additional financial support for travel, but I don't end up doing it (for example, the child is sick)?

You should contact your social worker and let them know and you can sort out an agreement between you.

I have to travel to the supermarket to buy groceries, including for the children in my care. Can I claim this travel in the additional 100 km of financial support?

No. Additional financial support is only paid for travel that relates to your caregiving role and is on top of your usual routine. If you would have already been undertaking travel, such as grocery shopping or dropping a child at school, you will not be paid additional financial support.

Scenarios

Scenario one: child-related travel – caregiver

Martin has been placed with Sylvia and Ron. Sylvia travels to work each day but in the opposite direction to Martin's school. In discussion with the social worker about how Martin will get to school, Sylvia said that for the next three weeks she can transport Martin in her car. The social worker agreed and calculated the total number of kilometres from Sylvia's house to Martin's school as 65 km per week. As the first 40 km are included in the foster care allowance paid each week, it was agreed with the site manager that Sylvia will be reimbursed a total of 25 km per week, to be paid at the end of three weeks. The total reimbursement based on the current Inland Revenue tier one rate of 95 cents per kilometre for Sylvia will be 25 km at \$1.04 cents for three weeks, which equals \$78.

If Sylvia was travelling to work each day in the same direction as Martin's school, then no additional financial support would be paid as the travel is not an additional cost.

Scenario two: long-distance travel

Hine and Gus live with their aunt and uncle, Maria and Pita, in a rural area. Each fortnight, Hine has an appointment to attend counselling in the city. This will continue for three months. The social worker discussed this with her supervisor and agreed that Pita will drive Hine to her appointments as the social worker is not required to attend. It's a 250 km round trip.

Maria and Pita receive the foster care allowance for Hine and Gus, which covers up to 40 km of travel per week per child. This 80 km combined total is used transporting Hine and Gus to and from school, and to their weekend activities.

The cost of travel to the counselling appointment will be supported as an additional trip on top of the regular travel Hine and Gus are currently doing. Each trip is reimbursed at the current Inland Revenue tier one rate of \$1.04 cents for the first 100 km and 30 cents per kilometre for the remaining 150 km. The total value of reimbursement for each trip is \$149. The social worker sought approval from the site manager, and it was agreed that Maria and Pita will be paid in fuel vouchers for this travel.

Once every three months, Maria and Pita travel to Auckland to take Hine and Gus to see their father. The return trip to Auckland requires two days of travel (one travel day each way). The trip is 480 km each way, a round trip of 960 km. The site manager approved funding for this travel at the rate of \$47 per travel day plus fuel, with fuel costs being paid at 30 cents per kilometre. Maria and Pita agreed to contact the site shortly before each trip to be paid in advance for the \$47 per travel day (a total of \$94). They then claim reimbursement for the fuel used during their trip, which will be paid at 30 cents per kilometre. The fuel costs can also be estimated and paid in advance.

Scenario three: regular travel payment

Tipene (Ti) is living with his grandparents. Every second Saturday, Ti's grandmother Waimarie takes him for a visit with his mother at their marae. This visit strengthens Ti's connections with his whanaunga and his marae, even though he does not live in the area. As part of reviewing financial support for Ti's plan, the social worker sat down with Ti and his grandmother and discussed Ti's needs. Ti walks to school and is collected by his coach for rugby practice and Saturday rugby. Waimarie only has to take the car to the supermarket.

The trip to the marae every fortnight is a 160 km round trip. The social worker took off the 80 km (40 km per week) already supported by the foster care allowance, leaving a total of 80 km. At \$1.04 cents per kilometre (current rate), the total amount for reimbursement is \$83.20 per fortnight (\$41.60 per week). The social worker sought approval from the site manager and set up an additional regular payment, which appears in Waimarie's bank account on the same day as the foster care allowance.

Scenario four: multiple children in a placement

Malosi and Semo are in the care of Sefina and John. Sefina and John have two children, and all four children attend the same college. Sefina and John spend a lot of time transporting all of the children to and from their sporting activities during the week and on the weekend. Sefina and John have asked for some additional financial support for travel costs because each of the children attends different practices, on different days, at different times. Saturday morning sport is at the same location for all of the children.

When Sefina and John talked their travel through with their social worker, they worked out that their weekly travel specific to Malosi and Semo does not exceed the 80 km already provided for in the standard foster care allowance. They agreed that no additional support is required.