

# Key Professionals on your Care Journey



Understanding the roles of different professionals can help you navigate the care system more effectively. Here's a quick guide to who they are and what they do.

**Note:** this information sheet is for **formal** caregivers, i.e. you receive board payments from Oranga Tamariki or a Care Agency. If you do not fit into this category, please refer to our separate information sheet on the topic for **informal** caregivers.

## CAREGIVER SOCIAL WORKER

The Caregiver Social Worker is your primary source of advice, advocacy, emotional, and practical support. They work with you to develop and update a support plan, provide learning opportunities to develop your caregiving skills and knowledge, and check in with you regularly to support and address any concerns. They also work closely with the Child Social Worker.

## CHILD SOCIAL WORKER

The Child Social Worker is connected to the child and holds primary responsibility for the child. They complete an All About Me plan, refer for a gateway assessment and visit the child regularly. They are responsible for any exit or placement plans - monitoring, reviewing or updating plans for the child as needed. They also seek approval for funding. [Click here for more information about the child social worker's responsibilities.](#)

## SUPERVISOR

The Child Social Worker's Supervisor will assist the Child Social Worker with case reflection and supervision. They have oversight of the Child Social Worker's work and will sometimes be required to sign off requests for the child.

... continued overleaf

## SITE MANAGER

An Oranga Tamariki site manager is responsible for managing and monitoring a site's resources, promoting Oranga Tamariki values, ensuring staff development, and high standards of responsiveness. If you put a complaint through the Feedback & Complaints team, the Site Manager will try and resolve the issue.

## LAWYER FOR CHILD

A lawyer for child is appointed by the Family Court Judge and acts in the child's best interests and wellbeing. They meet with the child to understand their views, present those views to the court and advise the child on appealing the court's decision.

The lawyer ensures that all factors relevant to the child's welfare and best interests are brought to the court's attention. They provide independent representation and advice to the child, ensuring they are not influenced by the parents or other parties involved in the case.

## FGC COORDINATOR

The Coordinator is responsible for leading the Family Group Conference (FGC). They develop an agreed whānau led plan, ensuring whānau, hapū, iwi, family groups and other key people, professionals and agencies, are fully involved and empowered to make decisions about a child or young person's welfare, while upholding the principles of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

## KAIRARANGA Ā-WHĀNAU

Kairaranga ā-whānau is a specialist Māori role in Oranga Tamariki. The literal meaning of the term is: a person who is a weaver of family connections. They identify and engage significant whānau, hapū and iwi members in decision-making for their tamariki as early as possible. [Click here for more information.](#)

## CARING FAMILIES AOTEAROA REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Our Regional Coordinators provide crucial support and advocacy to caregivers and their families, serving as the primary point of contact in their regions. They offer guidance, training, and resources to ensure children in care have safe and nurturing homes. To find your local Regional Coordinator, [click here.](#)

... continued overleaf

## CARING FAMILIES AOTEAROA SUPPORT GROUP LIAISON

A support group liaison is an independent, caregiving member of Caring Families Aotearoa who volunteers to organise meetings and get together for caregivers in their area. They are supported by their Regional Coordinator. [Click here to find a support group in your area.](#)

## VOYCE WHAKARONGO MAI ADVOCATE

If a child is in care, a VOYCE advocate can help them make sense of what's going on. They make sure the adults listen to them and have their voice heard on matters like spending time with siblings, going to hui and figuring out things when you leave care. [Click here to find out more.](#)

## YOUTH WORKER / MENTOR

As well as keeping youth safe, people in this role are also mentors, role models and coaches. They help rangatahi develop the skills, behaviours, and attitude they need to enrich their own lives and meaningfully contribute to their whānau and community. They do not make any decisions for the child – this still sits with the social worker.

## YOUTH AID OFFICER

A specialist police officer who works with children and young people (10-16 years old) who are involved in crime or at risk of offending. A Youth Aid Officer, aims to keep the child or young person out of the formal court system by using other interventions to ensure they are accountable for their actions.

*Every caregiving journey is unique. Some of these professionals will be involved in your journey from the outset, while others you will engage with at different stages, or not at all. We hope these role definitions will be helpful, all the same.*

Published November 2025

Caring Families Aotearoa (formerly Fostering Kids New Zealand) supports the thousands of children in care in Aotearoa, by supporting their caregivers.

Phone 0800 693 323 Email [enquiries@caringfamilies.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@caringfamilies.org.nz) Website [www.caringfamilies.org.nz](http://www.caringfamilies.org.nz)