

A more flexible medical certificate process for MSD clients

We're committed to a better experience for people on benefits. Not everyone is the same and it's important the Ministry of Social Development is able to respond to the needs of different clients.

Wellbeing Budget 2021

We're investing \$85m to improve the medical certificate process for MSD clients with a health condition, injury or disability.

From 31 January 2022, there'll be a new medical certificate process to assess people's work capacity and obligations when a health condition, injury or disability affects their ability to work.

- People need to give Work and Income a medical certificate from their health practitioner to help assess their eligibility for a benefit when they have a health condition, injury or disability that affects their ability to work.
- Previously, clients on Jobseeker Support – Health Condition and Disability had to provide subsequent medical certificates at least every four weeks for the first two months, and at least every 13 weeks subsequently.
- Under the new process for subsequent work capacity medical certificates, the client's health practitioner will have more flexibility to recommend the time between medical reviews.
- Medical review periods will be based on how long the client's ability to work is expected to be affected by their disability, injury or health condition, instead of being a mandatory period.
- The new process will also apply to other benefit recipients with a health condition, injury or disability, including Sole Parent Support and Youth Payment/Young Parent Payment.

It'll allow more flexibility based on the advice of the client's health practitioner – so there's fewer unnecessary medical appointments, less cost and less stress for clients.

- This will give health practitioners and MSD staff more discretion and flexibility. It improves the client experience and aligns with the Welfare Expert Advisory Group's recommendations.
- For clients, it may mean fewer unnecessary visits to their health practitioner, less cost and fewer gaps in their income support.
- It is also expected to reduce pressure on the health sector with an estimated 20,000 fewer medical certificates processed per month than the previous approach.
- Because of the impacts of COVID-19, clients with a health condition, injury or disability are not currently being asked for subsequent work capacity medical certificates to keep getting Jobseeker Support. This will extend until the new process begins on 31 January 2022.
- People on Supported Living Payment have a different medical certificate process – this is not affected by this initiative.

Costs (operating) \$m	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & outyears	TOTAL
	31.431	18.460	17.420	17.689	85.000