



14 JUL 2016

Dear

On 25 May 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding child car restraints.

For the sake of clarity I will address each of your questions in turn.

- *What is the official Ministry of Social Development position on the safety of 'rear facing' child restraints? (Car seats?) Is this the same position held by WINZ and Child Youth and Family? What guidance has been issued to WINZ and/or CYF staff about child restraints (car seats) and in particular what guidance have they been given about which car seats are suitable for children of varying different ages?*

The Ministry ensures that car restraints for children under seven years of age meet the Land Transport (Road User) rule of 2004 that a driver must ensure that, while a vehicle is in motion on a road, every passenger under the age of seven is properly restrained by an approved child restraint appropriate for that passenger.

- *How many applications have been made to WINZ since 1 Jan 2010 for funding to purchase child restraints (car seats)? - how many of these were successful? - how many were declined and what were the reasons for these being declined?*

I have enclosed two tables that show the number of hardship grants, declines and applications processed for car restraints and safety helmets. Please note that the data provided does contain both car restraints and safety helmets as this information is recorded under the same cost code and cannot be separated.

- *What types of assistance can be offered for someone on a low income who needs a car seat and has insufficient funds to do so?*

Special Needs Grants are available to people who need one-off assistance to meet essential and immediate needs which they are unable to meet themselves. Essential assistance for immediate needs include food, health and medical costs. This assistance is available to people regardless of whether they are receiving a benefit or New Zealand Superannuation, provided they meet the required income and asset tests. Further information about Special Needs Grants and Recoverable Assistance Payments can be found on the Work and Income website below:

Work and Income can assist families with childcare-related costs through a recoverable Advance Payment of Benefit for beneficiaries, a Recoverable Assistance

Payment for non-beneficiaries or a Special Needs Grant for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

Further information about Special Needs Grants and Recoverable Assistance Payments can be found on the Work and Income website below:

<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html>

<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/recoverable-assistance-payment-grant.html>

If a client meets all qualifications, Advance Payments of Benefit can be made to:

- purchase a new child car seat restraint for each pre-school dependent child of the client,
- hire child car restraints from reputable agencies for each pre-school aged dependent child of the client or
- purchase a new cycle safety helmet for each school aged dependent child of the client.
- *Do WINZ have a list of approved (or non-approved) child restraints? If yes, please provide copies of these from 1 January 2010 to present. Is there any way that someone can claim more than \$200 towards purchase of a child restraint (car seat)?*

Work and Income, a service line of Service Delivery, does not have an approved list of car restraints. Staff will ensure that the car restraints that are being purchased have been certified to an approved standard set out by the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA). Except where exceptional circumstances exist, payment for each dependent child cannot exceed \$200.

- *What safety checks are in place to ensure that the child restraints (car seats) are safe and legal for use (e.g. car seats expire within 6 or 10 years of manufacture, is this being checked?)*
- *Does CYF have guidelines about the types of seats they can purchase for children in their care? How many car seats are owned by CYF?*
- *What brands and models of child restraint (car seat) are they? Is there a list of recommended child restraint (car seat) brands, suppliers or retailers CYF use?*
- *What is the guidance for use of child restraints (car seats) by CYF workers transporting children?*

From 1 November 2013, all children under seven years of age must be restrained in an appropriate child car restraint for every ride. Children aged seven must be restrained in an appropriate child restraint or seat belt if one is available. Child, Youth and Family regional sites purchase the car restraints at site level and source them locally.

Child, Youth and Family does not have a list of providers for car restraints, however, caregivers are referred to the following link to the handbook found on the Child, Youth and Family website for further information: www.cyf.govt.nz/info-for-caregivers/caregiver-handbook/day-to-day-care-matters.html

Further information regarding child seats and restraints can be found on the NZTA's website at the following link: <http://nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/child-restraints/docs/child-restraints-save-lives-english.pdf>

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Bound', with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

PP

Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery

Table one: Number and amount of hardship grants, declines and applications processed for "car restraints and safety helmets" by year and hardship type between 01 January 2010 and 31 December 2015

Year	Hardship Type	Grants	Amount Granted	Declines	Total Applications Processed
2010	ADV	2,453	\$453,519	205	2,658
	RAP	S	\$2,743	S	15
	SNG	S	\$9,332	S	66
	Total	2,520	\$465,594	219	2,739
2011	ADV	1,862	\$358,835	146	2,008
	RAP	78	\$16,033	9	87
	SNG	42	\$8,933	8	50
	Total	1,982	\$383,801	163	2,145
2012	ADV	1,360	\$251,934	29	1,389
	RAP	S	\$13,642	97	S
	SNG	S	\$125	0	S
	Total	1,428	\$265,701	126	1,554
2013	ADV	1,421	\$259,339	6	1,427
	RAP	59	\$12,239	85	144
	Total	1,480	\$271,578	91	1,571
2014	ADV	S	\$274,858	S	1,447
	RAP	S	\$14,176	S	131
	Total	1,503	\$289,034	75	1,578
2015	ADV	S	\$284,695	S	1,408
	RAP	S	\$15,266	S	117
	Total	1,476	\$299,961	49	1,525

Notes:

- This is a count of grants, declines and processed applications. A client may have multiple grants or declines during the period.
- Hardship assistance payments include Special Needs Grants, Advance of Benefit and Recoverable Assistance Payments.
- ADV is an Advance payment of benefit
- SNG is Special Needs Grants
- RAP is Recoverable Assistance
- 'S' represents a suppressed cell to protect client privacy.

Table two: Number of declined hardship applications for "car restraints and safety helmets" by year and reason for decline between 01 January 2010 and 31 December 2015

Reason for decline	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Already received help for same/similar need in the past	S	S	S	0	0	S
Cash assets/Income exceed limit	S	S	7	S	S	S
Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen	9	S	7	S	10	S
Did not participate in budgeting	S	12	9	S	7	S
Does not meet all the criteria (rural sector S/down)	0	0	S	0	0	0
Has Sufficient Financial Resrc	S	S	S	0	0	0
Lack Of Representation	S	S	S	S	0	0
Need Can Be Met Another Way	37	22	23	18	9	10
No Dependent Children	0	S	S	0	0	0
Not A Qualifying Need	8	6	S	S	8	S
Not An Economic Purchase	29	12	11	10	S	S
Not An Emergency Situation	13	12	13	13	S	6
Not An Essential Need	9	13	16	12	S	6
Not supported by appropriate agency (e.g. Woman's Refuge)	0	0	S	0	0	0
Other	102	65	23	19	19	8
Outstanding balance exceeds 6 week limit	S	S	S	S	S	S
Qualifies For An Advance	S	S	S	0	0	0
Sufficient financial resource	0	0	0	0	S	S
Missing	0	0	0	S	0	0
Total	219	163	126	91	75	49

Notes:

- This is a count of declines. A client may have multiple declines during the period.
- Hardship assistance payments include Special Needs Grants, Advance of Benefit and Recoverable Assistance Payments.
- 'S' represents a suppressed cell to protect client privacy.