



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

11 AUG 2017

Dear

On 7 July 2017, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding grants for emergency dental treatment and Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARCs). This response addresses both of your requests in turn.

Emergency dental treatment grants:

- *For each calendar year from 2011 onwards,*
 1. *The total number of applications made for financial assistance for dental treatment.*
 2. *The number of applications that were granted.*
 3. *The number of applications that were declined.*
 4. *The total amount paid out by WINZ each year.*
 5. *A breakdown in the ages of people applying for assistance? And the numbers in each age group for each year?*
 6. *The types of treatment people are getting funding for (Again, even if it was in broad categories each year?)*
 7. *Are there any broad categories for reasons for declining an application? (And numbers for each?)*

The Ministry of Social Development through Work and Income provides recoverable and non-recoverable financial assistance to people, to meet an immediate need for essential items such as food, health costs (including medical and dental costs), power and other costs.

These payments are available to any person as long as they meet the income and asset test, and they are unable to meet the cost from any other source.

The Ministry recognises that individuals who are in receipt of a benefit may not be able to budget for unexpected dental costs, and support is available for those who meet the criteria to help with the cost of dental work.

The maximum amount payable to a person applying for a non-recoverable Special Needs Grant towards the cost of dental treatment is \$300 within any 52 week period. Where exceptional circumstances apply, this amount may be exceeded or more than one payment may be made. In situations where there are no exceptional circumstances, or where individuals do not meet the qualifying criteria for a Special Needs Grant, they may qualify for an Advance Payment of Benefit to meet any or all remaining costs.

All dental treatments funded through Work and Income must be provided by a health agency or registered dental practitioner. Examples of a qualifying dental situation include, but are not limited to, root treatment, tooth extraction, tooth restoration and treatment of acute infection.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 enclosed provide the number of Special Needs Grant applications processed and the amount granted for emergency dental treatment in the calendar years 2011 to 2016, broken down by age group, year and reasons for decline.

The Ministry does not centrally record the types of treatment clients are receiving funding for. This information may be held in notes on individual files, but not in all cases. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

Please find below, the Ministry's response to your second request.

Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs):

- *Information about the WINZ grants for LARCs. Since the policy came into effect, annual figures for:*
 1. *How many women have accessed the grant?*
 2. *Whether any women have been declined? (And for what reason)*
 3. *How much has been paid out in total each year?*
 4. *A breakdown of the age groups of the women who have accessed the grant, including figures for each age group*
 5. *A breakdown of the benefit category women fall into*
 6. *A breakdown of the specific type of LARC they have sought*

On 15 October 2012, hardship assistance for LARCs was introduced to assist with the cost of obtaining or removing LARCs for eligible clients for themselves, and/or their dependent female children aged 16 years or over. The provision of contraception for clients is to help women with the additional costs of accessing LARCs so that they can plan when they have children.

LARC payments can be made where a person requires assistance to discuss options or pay for the additional costs of obtaining or removing specific types of Long-Acting Reversible Contraception.

Work and Income provides assistance for LARCs for clients through the Special Needs Grant programme. As previously discussed, 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 such as food, health and medical costs.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with reasons clients' applications have been declined. This is because in most cases more than one specific reason exists for declining an application. Detailed descriptions of the reason for decline are held for case management purposes, but are recorded as text notes only and are therefore not electronically collated. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service. I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Further information regarding hardship assistance for LARCs is available on the Work and Income website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/long-acting-reversible-contraception-01.html.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Emergency Dental treatment and LARCs, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery

Emergency Dental treatment

***Table 1: Number of applications processed (grants and declines) for Emergency Dental treatment in the calendar years 2011 to 2016 by year.**

Calendar year	Applications processed		Total applications processed
	Number of grants	Number of declines	
2011	68,527	4,221	72,748
2012	73,739	2,453	76,192
2013	70,067	2,433	72,500
2014	68,743	2,191	70,934
2015	67,851	1,819	69,670
2016	67,545	1,657	69,202

***Table 2: Number of grants and amount paid for Emergency Dental treatment in the calendar years 2011 to 2016 by year.**

Calendar year	Number of grants	Amount granted (\$)
2011	68,527	\$21,359,022.08
2012	73,739	\$24,352,579.83
2013	70,067	\$23,311,099.98
2014	68,743	\$23,212,238.69
2015	67,851	\$23,388,762.24
2016	67,545	\$24,400,222.41

***Notes for tables 1, 2, 3, and 4:**

- Number of applications includes number of grants plus number of declines. This is not a number of clients.
- A client may have more than one grant or decline during the reported period.
- Age group 'Unspecified' is where at the time of grant, the age has not been captured and may be due to cancelling the benefit prior to finalising the payment.
- In Table 4 the reasons for decline where the cell numbers are low numbers, have been aggregated and represents under all other reasons including 'Unknown.'
- Reason for decline 'Other' is a category by itself.

***Table 3: Number of grants paid for Emergency Dental treatment in the calendar years 2011 to 2016 by year and age group.**

Calendar year	Age group												Total	
	16-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+		Unspecified
2011	26	1,822	9,666	8,506	7,140	7,284	7,622	7,093	5,950	4,552	3,501	5,365	0	68,527
2012	21	1,718	9,950	9,162	7,586	7,409	7,951	7,655	6,557	5,271	4,179	6,280	0	73,739
2013	32	1,632	8,868	8,338	6,953	6,682	7,328	7,244	6,641	5,336	4,412	6,601	0	70,067
2014	19	1,390	8,635	8,147	6,658	6,114	7,158	6,781	6,542	5,471	4,582	7,246	0	68,743
2015	23	1,267	7,890	7,992	6,427	5,935	6,586	6,855	6,668	5,679	4,890	7,639	0	67,851
2016	10	1,277	7,268	8,012	6,413	5,900	6,282	6,830	6,510	5,719	5,141	8,181	2	67,545

***Table 4: Number of applications for Emergency Dental treatment that were declined in the calendar years 2011 to 2016 by year and reason for decline.**

Reason for decline	Calendar year					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Cash assets/Income exceed limit	0	801	966	948	823	841
Need can be met in another way	0	253	298	290	265	199
Not an emergency situation	0	156	156	144	95	101
Already received help for same/similar need in the past	0	119	141	123	109	93
Not an economic purchase	0	98	92	87	64	52
Not a qualifying need	0	79	109	89	74	64
Cash Assets/Income exceed limit	595	57	0	0	0	0
Sufficient financial resource	0	44	27	26	27	16
Lack of representation	0	33	47	20	21	12
Need Can Be Met Another Way	305	29	0	0	0	0
Outstanding balance exceeds 6 week limit	0	29	28	25	15	12
Not an essential need	0	26	27	26	23	20
Outstanding Balance > 6 Week Limit	55	13	0	0	0	0
Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen	0	10	9	13	7	10
Lack of representation	162	9	0	0	0	0
Not an economic purchase	200	8	0	0	0	0
Not an emergency situation	167	7	0	0	0	0
Already paid for similar need	105	7	0	0	0	0
Has sufficient financial resources	102	7	0	0	0	0
Other	2,278	548	423	333	275	215
All other reasons including unknown	252	120	110	67	21	22
Total	4,221	2,453	2,433	2,191	1,819	1,657

Long-Acting Reversible Contraception

Table 5: Number of applications processed (grants and declines) for LARCs during the period 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2016 by year.

Calendar year	Applications processed		Total applications processed
	Grant	Decline	
2012	35	S	S
2013	215	12	227
2014	239	10	249
2015	177	12	189
2016	153	14	167

Table 6: Number of grants and amount paid for LARCs during the period 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2016 by year.

Calendar year	Number of grants	Amount granted (\$)
2012	35	\$7,368.29
2013	215	\$40,558.85
2014	239	\$36,450.49
2015	177	\$34,950.30
2016	153	\$28,538.35

Notes for tables 5 and 6:

- LARCs were introduced in October 2012, therefore calendar year 2012 includes months since October.
- Number of applications include number of grants plus number of declines.
- Amount granted may not be the amount spent.
- This is not a number of clients.
- A client may have more than one grant or decline during the reported period.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified. Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated. Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required.
- Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S.'
- LARC is available to:
 - Women receiving Youth Payment or Young Parent Payment
 - Women on a benefit (including partners) with or without children (excludes Job Seeker Support – Student Hardship)
 - Women aged 16 years and over who are the dependent children of a beneficiary
- Age group is based on the clients who received the LARC payment paid under LARC payment for a child included in a benefit is paid via the client (caregiver).

Table 7: Number of grants and amount paid for LARCs during the period 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2016 by year and age.

Calendar year	Age group						Total	
	16-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39		40+
2012	0	0	5	10	5	7	8	35
2013	7	17	56	50	34	23	28	215
2014	5	5	68	57	38	32	25	239
2015	5	12	36	51	30	16	27	177
2016	0	9	33	46	22	21	22	153

Table 8: Number of grants and amount paid for LARCs during the period 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2016.

Calendar year	Benefit group						Total
	Domestic Purposes Benefit related	Jobseeker Support	Supported Living Payment	Sole Parent Support	Independent Youth Benefit/Youth Payment/Young Parent Payment	Other benefits	
2012	27	0	0	0	0	8	35
2013	64	24	12	54	11	50	215
2014	0	61	25	142	9	2	239
2015	0	55	21	92	8	1	177
2016	0	51	18	83	0	1	153

Table 9: Number of grants and amount paid for LARCs during the period 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2016.

Calendar year	LARC payment type		Total
	Medical Related Costs	Pharmacy Related Costs & Transport Costs	
2012	5	5	35
2013	195	20	215
2014	220	19	239
2015	159	18	177
2016	141	12	153