



20 FEB 2019



On 12 November 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding Regional Health Advisors, second medical opinions, and the Medical Appeals Board, broken down by region and service centre.

Your requests have been grouped and are addressed in turn.

### **Regional Health Advisor**

- *How many people applying for Supported Living Payment were referred to the Regional Health Adviser, and how many of these were approved?*
- *How many people applying for Jobseeker Support with a medical deferral on the grounds of sickness, injury or disability under the current Section 88 (also referred to by the Ministry as JSS HCID) were referred to the Regional Health Adviser, and how many of these were approved?*
- *How many people applying for any other benefit on medical grounds were referred to the Regional Health Adviser, and how many of these were approved?*

Regional Health and Disability Teams provide advice to Work and Income case managers to assist them with making decisions regarding health condition impact on work capacity for applications, reviews and renewals for financial assistance. They also provide advice on services for people with a health condition or a disability. Regional Health Advisors (RHAs) and Regional Disability Advisors (RDAs) can seek clarification from GPs or medical specialists about a person's condition and their application.

Medical practitioners provide a medical diagnosis, which case managers use to determine work obligations. RHAs and RDAs provide the bridge between the two, helping identify how social welfare applies to health and vice versa.

When a client applies for Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability or Supported Living Payment, or other assistance on medical grounds staff may refer applications to the Regional Health and Disability Team if they have insufficient medical information to grant a benefit. If the RHA or RDA determines that further investigation or information is required, it can be recommended that the client is referred to a designated doctor to assist with their entitlement to a benefit. The RHA or RDA will make a recommendation to either grant or decline a benefit; however the final decision still lies with the case manager.

Please find enclosed two tables that show the number of working age clients who applied for Supported Living Payment - Health Condition & Disability and Jobseeker Support - Health Condition & Disability and were referred to a Regional Health Team

Page 1 of 13

during the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, and whether the application was granted or declined, broken down by Region and Service Centre.

In order to protect client privacy some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information may risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

The Ministry does not centrally record the number of applications for other benefits on medical grounds that have been referred to Regional Health Teams. Rather this information is held on individual client files. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as substantial collation and research would be required to find the information. I do not consider this to be in the public interest as this would remove staff from their core duties and impact on the effective functioning of the Ministry.

### **Second opinion**

- *How many people applying for Supported Living Payment were referred to a registered medical practitioner or psychiatrist for a second medical opinion under Section 40C, and how many of these were approved?*
- *How many people applying for Jobseeker Support with a medical deferral on the grounds of sickness, injury or disability under the current Section 88 (also referred to by the Ministry as JSS HCID) were referred to a registered medical practitioner or psychiatrist under Section 88E (4), and how many of these were approved?*
- *How many people applying for any other benefit on medical grounds were referred to a registered medical practitioner or psychiatrist, what was the matter and how many of these were approved?*

In cases where a client's doctor has asked for a second opinion to determine benefit eligibility or where RHAs or RDAs determine a doctor's diagnosis is insufficient to determine benefit eligibility, further medical advice can be sought from a designated doctor.

The Ministry does not centrally record the number of benefit applications and recipients that have been referred to a designated doctor where the doctor did not advise that the financial support was appropriate. Rather this information is held on individual client files. Therefore, I am unable to provide this information under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. This section allows me to refuse a request where substantial collation and research is required to find the information requested. In this case, to research the number of beneficiaries whose benefit type has not been endorsed by a designated doctor, the Ministry would need to manually access and collate thousands of individual client files. I do not consider this to be in the public interest as this would remove staff from their core duties and impact on the effective functioning of the Ministry.

Please note that the current business practices of Work and Income do not require the referrals to designated doctors to be held at a national level, rather information is held on individual client files where it is most needed.

## Medical Appeals Board

- *How many people applying for Supported Living Payment were referred to a Medical Appeals Board under Section 10B, and how many of these were approved?*
- *How many people applying for Jobseeker Support with a medical deferral on the grounds of sickness, injury or disability under the current Section 88 (also referred to by the Ministry as JSS HCID) were referred to a Medical Appeals Board, and how many of these were approved?*
- *How many people applying for any other benefit on medical grounds were referred to a Medical Appeals Board, and how many of these were approved?*

The Medical Appeals Board reviews all information available to them about a client's medical condition and/or disability and his or her capacity to work when a client seeks a right of appeal on medical grounds under subpart 5, section 411 of the Social Security Act 2018.

The Medical Appeals Board must decide whether the appellant meets the medical criteria or work capacity criteria for the relevant benefit and considers whether the right decision was made to decline or cancel the benefit on the basis of the information provided to the Ministry.

It is not the role of the Medical Appeals Board to diagnose, treat or manage a client's health condition and/or disability. Rather, it is an independent body established to ensure that correct and fair decisions are made within the legislation.

The enclosed Table Three provides the number of matters considered by the Medical Appeals Board during the 2017/18 financial year, broken down by type of application, and whether the decision was overturned.

The enclosed Table Four provides the number of matters considered by the Medical Appeals Board during the 2017/18 financial year, broken down by service centre, and whether the decision was overturned.

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

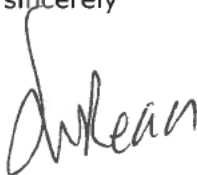
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Regional Health Advisors, second medical opinions, and Medical Appeals Board, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kay Read', written in a cursive style.

Kay Read

**Group General Manager Client Service Delivery**

**Table One: Number of working age clients who applied for Supported Living Payment - Health Condition & Disability and were referred to a Regional Health Team during the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, and whether the application was granted or declined, broken down by Region and Service Centre.**

Referred region	Referred Service centre	Referral outcome		Total referrals
		Approved	Declined	
Northland	Dargaville	S	S	8
	Kaikohe	S	S	17
	Kaitaia	23	8	31
	Kamo	16	22	38
	Kawakawa	10	10	20
	Kerikeri	11	17	28
	Whangarei Central	34	7	41
<b>Total</b>		<b>108</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>183</b>
Auckland Metro	Albany	S	S	26
	Avondale	28	22	50
	Birkenhead District	19	15	34
	Browns Bay	S	S	20
	Clendon	15	6	21
	Glenfield	S	S	19
	Glenmall	24	10	34
	Grey Lynn	31	7	38
	Helensville	S	S	15
	Highland Park	30	14	44
	Hunters Corner District	S	S	20
	Mangere	62	55	117
	Manukau District	19	16	35
	Manurewa	51	27	78
	Mt Albert	32	18	50
	Mt Eden	25	16	41
	New Lynn	29	18	47
	Onehunga	27	8	35
	Orewa	41	22	63
	Otahuhu	26	21	47
	Otara	39	17	56
	Papakura	64	22	86
	Papatoetoe	19	13	32
	Pukekohe	17	16	33
	Queen Street	39	11	50
	Takapuna	25	17	42
	Tamaki	40	35	75
	Three Kings	35	18	53
	Waiheke	12	10	22
	Waitakere	52	31	83
Waiuku	S	S	9	
Warkworth	17	6	23	
Westgate	30	16	46	
<b>Total</b>		<b>934</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>1,444</b>

\*Table continued overleaf

Referred region	Referred Service centre	Referral outcome		Total referrals
		Approved	Declined	
Waikato	Cambridge	S	S	21
	Dinsdale	52	19	71
	Five Cross Roads	62	20	82
	Glenview	S	S	30
	Hamilton	S	S	36
	Hamilton East	28	7	35
	Huntly	23	0	23
	Matamata	S	S	8
	Morrinsville	S	S	24
	Ngaruawahia	S	S	23
	Paeroa	16	0	16
	Te Awamutu	S	S	21
	Thames	32	7	39
	Waihi	S	S	24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>453</b>
Taranaki	Hawera	56	11	67
	Marton	S	S	29
	New Plymouth	99	18	117
	Stratford	S	S	43
	Taihape	S	S	20
	Taumarunui	S	S	30
	Te Kuiti	S	S	35
	Waitara	S	S	36
	Whanganui	111	16	127
	<b>Total</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>504</b>
Bay of Plenty	Greerton	41	9	50
	Kawerau	16	10	26
	Mount Maunganui	S	S	24
	Opotiki	11	0	11
	Rotorua	37	22	59
	Taupo	21	12	33
	Tauranga	37	14	51
	Te Puke	S	S	10
	Tokoroa	S	S	77
	Whakatane	29	11	40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>381</b>
East Coast	Flaxmere	S	S	38
	Gisborne	92	13	105
	Hastings Community Link	85	14	99
	Napier	93	6	99
	Ruatoria	S	S	18
	Taradale	S	S	32
	Waipukurau	S	S	34
	Wairoa	16	0	16
	<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>441</b>
Central	Dannevirke	S	S	54
	Feilding	S	S	43
	Foxton	S	S	12
	Horowhenua	53	10	63
	Kapiti	65	6	71
	Otaki	S	S	27
	Palmerston North	197	64	261
	Wairarapa	75	15	90
	<b>Total</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>621</b>

\*Table continued overleaf.

Referred region	Referred Service centre	Referral outcome		Total referrals
		Approved	Declined	
Wellington	Johnsonville	20	8	28
	Lower Hutt	54	15	69
	Naenae	47	35	82
	Newtown	47	41	88
	Porirua	58	28	86
	Upper Hutt	S	S	35
	Wainuiomata	S	S	16
	Wellington	30	11	41
	<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>445</b>
Nelson	Blenheim	S	0	S
	Greymouth	S	S	S
	Nelson	S	S	S
	Richmond	0	S	S
	<b>Total</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>8</b>
Canterbury	Ashburton	S	S	19
	Canterbury Youth Service	S	0	S
	Hornby	S	S	50
	Linwood	56	6	62
	New Brighton	37	7	44
	Papanui	24	9	33
	Rangiora	S	S	32
	Riccarton	S	S	27
	Shirley	S	S	37
	Sydenham	49	9	58
	<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>365</b>
Southern	Alexandra	8	0	8
	Baldutha	S	S	11
	Dunedin Central	59	23	82
	Gore	S	S	18
	Invercargill	94	10	104
	Mosgiel	S	S	12
	Oamaru	S	S	32
	Queenstown	13	0	13
	South Dunedin	33	11	44
Timaru	S	S	40	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>364</b>
Other	<b>Total</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>3,995</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>5,235</b>

**Notes:**

- The table includes working age clients only (18 to 64 years)
- This includes only the clients who have been referred to RHA/RDA and the outcome is either approved or declined
- Region 'Other' includes Centralised Collection Unit, National Office, Seniors Support Centre, Specialised Processing centres, Study Link Processing Centre, Wellington Contact Centre and Youth Service Support Unit
- 'S' represents data that has been suppressed to protect the privacy of natural persons.

**Table Two: Number of working age clients who applied for Jobseeker Support - Health Condition & Disability and were referred to a RHA or RDA during the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, and whether the application was granted or declined, broken down by Region and Service Centre.**

Referred region	Referred Service Centre	Referral outcome		Total referrals
		Approved	Declined	
Northland	Dargaville	6	0	6
	Kaikohe	S	S	S
	Kaitaia	S	S	S
	Kamo	S	S	45
	Kawakawa	S	0	S
	Kerikeri	10	0	10
	Whangarei Central	S	0	S
	<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>75</b>
Auckland Metro	Albany	S	0	S
	Avondale	S	0	S
	Birkenhead District	S	S	9
	Browns Bay	S	0	S
	Clendon	S	S	7
	Glenfield	6	0	6
	Glenmall	7	0	7
	Grey Lynn	7	0	7
	Helensville	S	0	S
	Highland Park	S	S	19
	Hunters Corner District	S	0	S
	Mangere	S	S	19
	Manukau District	S	0	S
	Manurewa	S	S	16
	Mt Albert	11	0	11
	Mt Eden	8	0	8
	New Lynn	S	S	18
	Onehunga	7	0	7
	Orewa	6	0	6
	Otahuhu	6	0	6
	Otara	S	S	16
	Papakura	S	S	13
	Papatoetoe	S	S	11
	Pukekohe	S	0	S
	Queen Street	S	0	S
	Takapuna	S	S	10
	Tamaki	20	0	20
	Three Kings	S	S	12
	Waiheke	8	0	8
	Waitakere	S	S	13
Warkworth	S	S	S	
Westgate	S	S	11	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>291</b>

\*Table continued overleaf



Referred region	Referred Service Centre	Referral outcome		Total referrals
		Approved	Declined	
Waikato	Cambridge	S	0	S
	Dinsdale	S	0	S
	Five Cross Roads	S	0	S
	Glenview	S	0	S
	Hamilton	S	0	S
	Hamilton East	S	0	S
	Huntly	S	0	S
	Matamata	S	0	S
	Morrinsville	S	0	S
	Paeroa	S	0	S
	Te Awamutu	S	0	S
	Thames	7	0	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>
Taranaki	Hawera	S	S	10
	Marton	S	0	S
	New Plymouth	14	0	14
	Stratford	S	0	S
	Taihape	S	S	S
	Taumarunui	S	S	S
	Te Kuiti	S	0	S
	Waitara	S	0	S
	Whanganui	S	S	23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>71</b>
Bay of Plenty	Greerton	S	S	S
	Kawerau	S	0	S
	Rotorua	S	S	S
	Taupo	S	0	S
	Tauranga	S	S	9
	Te Puke	S	0	S
	Tokoroa	S	S	S
	Whakatane	S	0	S
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>
East Coast	Flaxmere	S	0	S
	Gisborne	S	S	14
	Hastings Community Link	S	S	7
	Napier	S	S	9
	Ruatoria	S	0	S
	Taradale	S	0	S
	Waipukurau	S	0	S
	Wairoa	S	0	S
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40</b>
Central	Dannevirke	S	0	S
	Feilding	S	S	S
	Horowhenua	S	S	10
	Kapiti	S	S	S
	Otaki	S	0	S
	Palmerston North	S	S	27
	Wairarapa	S	S	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>57</b>

\*Table continued overleaf

Referred region	Referred Service Centre	Referral outcome		Total referrals
		Approved	Declined	
Wellington	Johnsonville	S	S	S
	Lower Hutt	S	S	9
	Naenae	7	0	7
	Newtown	6	0	6
	Porirua	S	S	10
	Upper Hutt	S	0	S
	Wainuiomata	S	0	S
	Wellington	S	S	11
	<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>51</b>
Canterbury	Ashburton	S	0	S
	Hornby	S	S	S
	Linwood	S	S	S
	New Brighton	S	S	S
	Papanui	S	S	S
	Rangiora	S	0	S
	Riccarton	S	0	S
	Shirley	S	0	S
	Sydenham	S	S	S
	<b>Total</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>27</b>
Southern	Dunedin Central	S	S	S
	Invercargill	S	S	S
	Oamaru	S	0	S
	South Dunedin	S	0	S
	<b>Total</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>12</b>
Other	<b>Total</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>629</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>694</b>

**Notes:**

- The table includes working age only (18 to 64 years)
- This includes only the clients who have been referred to RHA/RDA and the outcome is either approved or declined
- Region 'Other' includes Centralised Collection Unit, National Office, Seniors Support Centre, Specialised Processing centres, Study Link Processing Centre, Wellington Contact Centre and Youth Service Support Unit
- 'S' represents data that has been suppressed to protect the privacy of natural persons.

**Table Three: the number of matters considered by the Medical Appeals Board during the 2017/18 financial year, broken down by type of application, and whether the decision was overturned.**

<b>Type of application</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Hearing Arranged</b>	<b>Decision Overturned</b>
Jobseeker Support	109	40	12
Supported Living Payment	66	26	S
Other	29	18	S
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>24</b>

**Notes:**

- Jobseeker Support may include Jobseeker Support - Health Condition & Disability and other Jobseeker benefits where a medical deferral is sought
- Supported Living Payment may include Supported Living Payment - Health Condition & Disability and Supported Living Payment - Carer
- 'S' represents data that has been suppressed to protect the privacy of natural persons
- Not all MAB reviews are heard. They may be withdrawn by the client, not be a MAB issue but a ROD, or it may be reviewed internally.

**Table Four: Number of matters considered by the Medical Appeals Board during the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, broken down by service centre, and whether the decision was overturned.**

Region	Service Centre	Received	Hearing Arranged	Decision Overturned
Northland	Kamo	S	0	0
	Kerikeri	S	0	0
	Whangarei Central	S	S	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>0</b>
Auckland	Albany	S	S	0
	Birkenhead	S	0	0
	Clendon	S	S	0
	Glen Innes (Community Link)	S	S	S
	Glen Innes	S	S	S
	Glenfield	S	S	0
	Glenmall	S	S	0
	Mangere	S	S	0
	Manurewa	S	S	0
	Mount Albert	S	S	S
	New Lynn	S	S	0
	Orewa	S	S	S
	Otahuhu	S	0	0
	Papakura	S	S	0
	Papatoetoe	S	S	0
	Ponsonby	S	S	0
	Pukekohe	S	S	0
	Queen Street	S	S	S
	Three Kings	S	S	0
	Waiheke Island	S	S	S
Waitakere	S	S	0	
Warkworth	S	S	0	
Westgate	S	S	0	
<b>Total</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>6</b>
Waikato	Dinsdale	S	S	S
	Five Cross Roads	S	0	0
	Hamilton Central	S	S	0
	Hamilton East	S	S	0
	Matamata	S	0	0
	Te Awamutu	S	S	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>S</b>
Taranaki	Marton	S	0	0
	New Plymouth	S	S	S
	Stratford	S	0	0
	Wanganui	S	S	0
	Wanganui Saint Hill Street	S	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>

\*Table continued overleaf

Region	Service Centre	Received	Hearing Arranged	Decision Overturned
Bay of Plenty	Greerton	S	S	S
	Kawerau	6	6	S
	Mount Maunganui	S	0	0
	Rotorua	S	S	0
	Taupo	S	S	0
	Tauranga	S	S	S
	Te Puke	S	0	0
	Turangi	S	S	0
	Whakatane	S	S	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>S</b>
East Coast	Gisborne	S	0	0
	Hastings East	S	S	0
	Napier	S	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>0</b>
Central	Kapiti	S	0	0
	Palmerston North - Main Street	6	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>S</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Wellington	Johnsonville	7	S	S
	Lower Hutt	S	0	0
	Naenae (Community Link)	S	S	S
	Naenae	S	S	0
	Newtown	11	6	S
	Porirua	S	0	0
	Wainuiomata	S	0	0
	Wellington	9	S	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>S</b>
Nelson	Blenheim	S	0	0
	Greymouth	S	0	0
	Motueka	S	0	0
	Nelson City	8	0	0
	Richmond	11	S	S
	Westport	S	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>
Canterbury	Linwood (Community Link)	S	S	0
	Linwood	S	0	0
	New Brighton	S	S	0
	Papanui	7	S	S
	Rangiora	S	0	0
	Riccarton	S	S	S
	Shirley	S	S	0
	Sydenham	S	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>S</b>
Southern	Balclutha	S	0	0
	Dunedin Central	S	S	0
	Invercargill	8	S	S
	Oamaru	S	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>204</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>24</b>

**Notes:**

- 'S' represents data that has been suppressed to protect the privacy of natural persons
- Not all MAB reviews are heard. They may be withdrawn by the client, not be a MAB issue but a ROD, or it may be reviewed internally.