



03 JUN 2021

Dear

On 28 April 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *What are the drop-down options for declining people support at Work and Income (for all support - food, grants, quotes, housing etc)?*
2. *How does the ranking system for Kainga Ora homes work? How are people prioritised and how does their rankings change - from moving up and down the list and on and off.*

On 6 May 2021, you expanded your request and added the following question:

3. *I'd like to know what the formal process is for case managers when they're deciding whether to grant assistance please/exercising discretion. What kind of documentation is required of people applying for assistance, what kind of questions they ask, and how they determine whether people are granted support or not?*

On 18 May 2021, you clarified the third question of your request in the following way:

- *Can we please have the decline processes for main benefits and emergency and transitional housing.*

I will respond to your questions in turn:

1. *What are the drop-down options for declining people support at Work and Income (for all support - food, grants, quotes, housing etc)?*

Please see the **Appendix**, in which we have listed the decline reasons available in drop-down menus in the Ministry's IT system as at 26 May 2021. These have been categorised into four assistance types, as per your request. See **Schedule One, Two, Three, and Four** for decline reasons for 'Main benefits', 'Supplementary assistance', 'Hardship assistance' and 'Childcare Support', respectively.

2. *How does the ranking system for Kainga Ora homes work? How are people prioritised and how does their rankings change - from moving up and down the list and on and off.*

Please find a list of links to the Ministry's website below. The links lead to parts of the website that provide the information requested. As this information is publicly available, your request for this information is refused under section 18(d) of the Act.

General information on the ranking system:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html

Prioritisation:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/housing-need-priority-ratings-01.html

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/calculation-of-overall-priority-rating-01.html

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/fast-track-provision.html

Changing the priority rating:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/changing-a-client-s-initial-priority-rating-01.html

- 3. I'd like to know what the formal process is for case managers when they're deciding whether to grant assistance/exercising discretion. What kind of documentation is required of people applying for assistance, what kind of questions they ask, and how they determine whether people are granted support or not? Can we please have the decline processes for main benefits and emergency and transitional housing.*

When deciding whether to grant assistance, case managers refer to the relevant eligibility criteria. Eligibility information is publicly available and can be found on the Ministry website. For example, please see the following link for the qualifications for main benefits: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/index.html.

Regarding the application process for a benefit, the client will generally have an in-depth conversation with a case manager at their 'new business' appointment. The appointment will be over the phone or face-to-face. In the appointment, the case manager will discuss the client's circumstances to further determine his or her eligibility.

In terms of the decision to grant or decline an application for assistance, some criteria allow for discretion on the part of the case manager. When the Ministry considers qualifications that are discretionary, case managers can refer to examples in the Ministry's Guide to Social Development Policy (or 'MAP', for short) to help determine eligibility and inform his or her decision making. For example, Jobseeker Support requires that a client take reasonable steps to find, and be willing to undertake, employment. A case manager might discuss the following with the client before determining whether they meet this qualification:

1. If the client (or partner) had the opportunity, would they:

- be available for work of at least 20 hours per week (part-time work obligations)
- be available for work for 30 hours or more a week (full-time work obligations)
- accept any suitable job offers within their abilities (note that this can include weekend work depending on the client or partner's individual circumstances)
- not restrict their job search to vacancies within their own trade
- not restrict their job search to vacancies in their chosen occupation
- not move frequently from one area to another with no intention of getting a job.

2. Has the client (or partner) begun to take steps to find work? For example by:

- searching newspapers and other media for vacancies
- making applications for suitable jobs
- contacting employers about vacancies.

There are many other examples and scenarios in MAP and the Ministry's intranet system (i.e. 'Doogle'), to help frontline staff determine eligibility based on the client's circumstances. Case managers may also seek advice from the Ministry's Helpline and their capability developers if they are unsure about a client's eligibility.

The documentation required to support an application for assistance will depend on the assistance type being applied for. For example, an application for Jobseeker Support asks clients to provide official identification (e.g., birth certificate, passport, or driver licence), proof of name change (if applicable), and proof of bank account details.

Instructions regarding supporting documentation are usually supplied in the application form itself. Further guidance can be found online via the link already provided to you: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/index.html.

If a case manager, after receiving all the information needed to determine eligibility, decides to decline an application for assistance, the Ministry would follow this process:

- Clearly note why the benefit has been declined.
- Complete a Client Event Note (or CEN) in the Ministry online case management system.
- Mark the task's result as "Complete - send notification."
- Send a letter summary (LSUM) to the client to advise.

This process would be the same for applications for an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant. As already explained, eligibility is determined through a discussion with the client, reference to 'MAP' and relevant legislation, and sometimes with advice from Capability Developers and Helpline. If the client does not qualify, the Ministry would register the application in the system, decline the application, and send the client a letter outlining their right to request a formal review.

Your query regarding transitional housing is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act. Although case managers are responsible for referring clients to transitional housing providers, the decision whether to approve or decline a placement lies with the provider itself. As such, 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. HUD advise on their website that transitional housing is managed by accredited social service providers (please see here: www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/addressing-homelessness/transitional-housing/).

The principles and purposes of the Act 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
- 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. 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 reasons and processes to decline applications for assistance, 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



Bridget Saunders
**Manager, Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**

Appendix

Schedule One: Decline reasons available in drop-down menus in the Ministry's IT system used for applications for main benefits, as at 26 May 2021

Reason for decline:

- 001 Address unknown
- 002 Adopted
- 003 Assets in excess of limit
- 004 Attendance ceased - CCS
- 005 Caregivers benefit cancelled
- 006 Child commenced work
- 008 Caregiver is stepparent
- 009 Child to be included in benefit
- 011 Ceased employment
- 013 Child died
- 014 Child in hospital or registered home
- 015 Child left care/no longer dependent
- 017 Child not unsupported
- 018 Child over maximum age
- 019 Commenced living de facto
- 020 Course not within eligible criteria
- 022 Died (non-accident)
- 023 Death by accident
- 024 Declined at applicant's request
- 025 Does not meet medical qualification (child)
- 026 Does not meet residential qualification
- 027 Does not meet service qualification
- 028 Does not meet medical qualification
- 029 Child's care changed
- 030 Excess income
- 032 Full time student
- 034 Granted ACC - exceeds entitlement to benefit
- 035 Granted Orphans Benefit
- 036 Granted other service
- 037 Granted UK/Australia War Pension
- 038 In employment/returned to work
- 039 In prison
- 041 IRD request
- 043 Insufficient identification
- 044 Lack of representation
- 045 Lack of medical coverage
- 046 Left TOP course
- 047 Left district
- 048 Left NZ
- 049 Left NZ absence 26-30 weeks
- 050 Left NZ absence > 30 weeks
- 051 Left NZ for Australia absence > 30 weeks
- 052 Left NZ for UK absence 26-30 weeks
- 053 Left NZ for UK absence > 30 weeks
- 054 Left school
- 055 Less than minimum age

058 Married
061 No loss of earnings
062 No special circumstances
064 Non-return of declaration/renewal
065 Not seeking work
067 Not unemployed
068 Not authenticated
070 Other
074 Placed into full time work
075 Placed by Rehab in full time work
078 Placed on TOP course
080 Reconciled
081 Remarried
082 Returned to work during stand down
083 Partner released from prison
084 Temporary placement of child
086 Unemployed as a result of strike action
087 Returned to work
090 Registered in error
091 VU penalty imposed
099 Placed into temporary work
101 Placed on restart project
102 Self placed in work
106 Separated
107 Child in receipt/entitled to other benefit
108 Child left care - returned to parents
109 Caregiver withdrew from benefit due to LPC requirements
110 Caregiver withdrew from benefit due to family meeting
111 Care only temporary (less than 12 months)
112 Admitted to hospital
113 Transferred to another district
114 System-transferred to other benefit
115 Overseas > 4 weeks
118 Lump sum paid
122 Already in receipt of service
128 13-week VU imposed – refused work
129 13-week VU imposed – did not attend job interview
130 13-week VU imposed – left Community Task Force
131 13-week VU imposed – unavailable for work NZ Superannuation
150 Not ordinarily resident
151 Less than 10 years NZ residence
152 Not receiving qualifying service
153 Not age 65
154 Left Non-reciprocal country
155 Left reciprocal country
156 Overseas bank account not verified
157 Awaiting request for "Overseas Details" form
158 UK Pension exceeds service
159 UK Pension exceeds "Hospital Rate"
160 Other overseas pension exceeds service rate
162 Assets gifted
163 Partner qualifies for Veterans Pension
202 Lack of medical coverage

203 Disablement less than 70%
204 Overseas service requirements not met
205 Decline partner inclusion as income too high
232 Qualifies for NZ Superannuation
236 Other
238 No special circumstances
471 Other Options of care available
574 Family Tax Credit Income threshold exceeded
612 Commenced civil union
710 Application process not completed before Lapse date

Pre-benefit Reason for decline:

720 No decision about a job offer
721 Failed to attend job interview
722 Job offer declined
723 Accepted full-time job

International Affairs and DIU Users only:

439 SLP left NZ for Australia
440 SLP left NZ for Reciprocal Country
441 NZ/Australia left for 3rd country
442 Left Netherlands > 26 weeks
443 Left Netherlands > 6 weeks
445 Does not meet Agreement criteria
446 Lack of reps (interview)
447 SLP Left NZ
551 Assets in excess of Australian limit
553 Fail to claim Australian compo (DOI)
554 Fail to claim foreign pension – Section 173(2)
555 Granted compo - exceeds Australian entitlement
556 Lack of reps (correspondence)
557 Left Australia > 26 weeks
566 Overseas correspondence returned unclaimed
567 Overseas Pension in excess (Aus ent = 0)
568 Withdrawn/voluntary surrender
569 Lack of reps (ent review)

Schedule Two: Decline reasons available in drop-down menus in the Ministry's IT system used for applications for supplementary assistance, as at 26 May 2021

Reason for decline:

001 Address unknown
003 Assets in excess of limit
004 Attendance ceased
011 Ceased employment
017 Child not supported
020 Course not within criteria
024 Declined applicant's request
025 Does not meet medical qualification (child)
028 Does not meet medical qualification (client/partner)
030 Excess income
038 In employment/return to work
039 In prison
044 Lack of representation
046 Left TOP course
047 Left District
048 Left NZ
049 Left NZ for 26-30 weeks
050 Left NZ for > 30 weeks
051 Left NZ for Australia for 30 weeks
052 Left NZ for UK for 26-30 weeks
053 Left NZ for UK for 30 weeks
054 Left school
055 Less than minimum age (child)
056 Left course
062 No special circumstances
066 Not receiving qualifying benefit
070 Other
072 Parent benefit declined/suspended/cancelled
090 Registered in error
139 Costs not verified

Reason for decline:

147 Situation doesn't justify pymt
195 Course ceased
206 Change of child's address
207 Change in accommodation costs
209 Change of income
238 Special circumstances (letter to be produced)
345 Family tax credit eligibility not established
710 Application process not completed before Lapse date
993 Did not pass 50% of training
995 Full time study criteria not met

Reason for decline - MS RFP codes 523 (RePlace) and 524 (ReCover) only:

- 627 Redundant prior to 8 November 2008
- 628 Not Redundant
- 629 Was not working full time
- 630 Has not worked continuously for previous 6 months
- 631 Has not applied within 20 days of redundancy
- 632 Does not meet residency qualification
- 633 Not available for full time work
- 634 Other

Reason for decline - MS RFP codes 523 (RePlace) only:

- 637 Not receiving AS Max
- 638 Not entitled to AS
- 639 HNZ – no entitlement
- 640 Redundancy more than \$25,000

Reason for decline - MS RFP codes 524 (ReCover) only:

- 621 No dependent children
- 622 Receiving In-work tax credit from IR
- 623 Not eligible for In-work tax credit

Schedule Three: Decline reasons available in drop-down menus in the Ministry's IT system used for applications for hardship assistance, as at 26 May 2021

MSDDAAR1	Already received help for same/similar need in the past
MSDDAAR2	Application not lodged within 12 months
MSDDAAR3	Cash assets/Income exceed limit
MSDDAAR4	Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen
MSDDAAR5	Cost of funeral, unveiling or koha must be met by client
MSDDAAR6	Does not meet all the criteria (rural sector S/down)
MSDDAAR7	Lack of Representation
MSDDAAR8	More than 1 person applied to meet the same expense
MSDDAAR9	Need can be met in another way
MSDDAAR10	No dependent children (Strike S/down)
MSDDAAR11	Not a compulsory school fee (e.g. school camps etc)
MSDDAAR12	Not a long-term patient (reestablishment costs)
MSDDAAR13	Not a qualifying need
MSDDAAR14	Not a qualifying relative (funeral - travel costs)
MSDDAAR15	Not an economic purchase
MSDDAAR16	Not an emergency situation
MSDDAAR17	Not an essential need
MSDDAAR18	Not supported by appropriate agency (e.g. Woman's Refuge)
MSDDAAR19	Other
MSDDAAR20	Outstanding balance exceeds 6-week limit
MSDDAAR21	Partner is eligible for stand-down
MSDDAAR22	Qualifies for a non-recoverable SNG
MSDDAAR23	Qualifies for an advance
MSDDAAR24	Qualifies for Disability Allowance

MSDDAAR25	Qualifies for MRA
MSDDAAR26	Qualifies for Regional Health Area
MSDDAAR27	Qualifies for SP BFT/TAS
MSDDAAR28	Receiving a Training Incentive Allowance
MSDDAAR29	Did not participate in budgeting
MSDDAAR30	Sufficient financial resource
MSDDAAR31	Landlord is not likely to continue the tenancy
MSDDAAR32	Not likely to sustain the tenancy
MSDDAAR33	Not a signatory on the tenancy agreement
MSDDAAR34	Not at risk of losing the tenancy
MSDDAAR35	Already had a rent arrears payment in the last 52 weeks
MSDDAAR36	Qualifies for a Recoverable Assistance Payment
MSDDAAR37	Not Applicable

Schedule Four: Decline reasons available in drop-down menus in the Ministry's IT system used for applications for childcare support, as at 26 May 2021

Reason for decline:

- 01 Address unknown
- 02 Adopted
- 04 Attendance ceased
- 13 Child died
- 14 Child in hospital or home
- 15 Child left care
- 16 Child left centre
- 18 Child over maximum age
- 22 Client died non-accident
- 23 Client died accident
- 24 Declined applicant's request
- 26 Does not meet residential qualn
- 30 Excess income
- 40 Insufficient hours
- 44 Lack of representation
- 47 Left district
- 48 Left NZ
- 49 Left NZ for 26-30 weeks
- 50 Left NZ for 30 weeks
- 51 Left NZ for Australia for 30 weeks
- 52 Left NZ for UK for 26-30 weeks
- 53 Left NZ for UK for 30 weeks
- 70 Other
- 710 Application process not completed before Lapse date
- 861 Child receives ECE free hours