



7 November 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 12 September 2024 requesting the following information:

"Debt - Good practise - Can I please request a copy of this document asap.

Can I please obtain a copy of the document that covers MSD policy and procedures outlining the computer process on swift that MSD processors follow when updating annual gross income declared formally by a Sole Parent Support asap please, - even the weekly declaration process too please."

The Ministry emailed you on 23 September 2024 to suggest that you refine your request, as it is broad in scope and was likely to be refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). We requested this information from you by 26 September 2024, but did not receive a response from you.

We subsequently received the following email from you on 9 October 2024:

- *I want to know does 'procedures and manuals' in combination with 'Best practise', does the MSD computer operator processing and increasing declared annual income with a current 52 wk income period, does 'best practise' or manuals and procedures give the processor discretion to reassess the new income from the beginning of the 52 wk date if it 1.any debt can be offset from any arrears as there is still considerable weeks left within the current review period to pay the client the abated weekly payment thus avoiding overpayment come review of income?!!"*

I have considered your request under the Act.

I have interpreted your request to be for information about processes the Ministry follows when adding income in SWIFTT, processes related to debt and the

operational policy guidelines for charging income annually or weekly (eg for clients who receive Sole Parent Support).

Please find a copy of the 'Debt Good Practice' page from the Ministry's intranet **attached**, including copies of 15 of the 16 pages linked to the 'Debt Good Practice' page. We have not included a copy of information relating to the "Debt at grant of debt" page, as this link is invalid (a message appears stating "we can't seem to find the page you're looking for).

Two further documents outlining Ministry processing guidance are also **attached**:

- Adding/Changing Income and Assets
- Adding income in SWIFTT

These additional documents contain information about understanding, establishing, and preventing client debt, and instructions for adding or updating client income or asset details in SWIFTT.

Please note that internal email addresses and phone numbers have been redacted from the above documents, as they are not in scope of your request.

"MAP" provides operational policy guidance to Ministry staff, based on legislation. It includes guidelines to help staff make accurate and sound decisions, to help ensure clients get their full and correct entitlement. An exact copy of all the information contained in MAP is available publicly on Work and Income's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/index.html.

Please refer to the following links on Work and Income's public website which contain operational policy guidance on charging income annually or weekly, and the review of annual income.

Charging income:

1. Sole parent Support

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/sole-parent-support/charging-income-01.html

2. Jobseeker Support

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/charging-income-01.html

Review of annual income:

3. Review of Annual Income – Sole Parent Support

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/sole-parent-support/changes-and-reviews-sole-parent-support/review-of-annual-income-01.html.

4. Review of Annual Income – sole parents and grandparented clients only

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/review-of-annual-income-sole-parents-and-grandpare-01.html

We have only provided you with a sample of the Ministry's operational guidance on charging income and the review of annual income. For further information, please refer to MAP on Work and Income's public website.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

pp.



Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services