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Recruitment of Community Representatives

The Auckland, Canterbury, East Coast, Nelson, Southern, Waikato and Wellington regions are actively recruiting for community representatives to replace those whose tenures end on 30 June 2019.

As you know, community representatives are Ministerial appointments, so the Minister is the only person who has the authority to appoint. If your tenure ends on 30 June 2019 and you have reapplied for the role, note that you will need to stand aside from 1 July 2019 until the Minister has reappointed you. This means that you cannot be a part of a Benefits Review Committee until you have a letter from Minister Sepuloni confirming the appointment from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2024.

If your tenure does not end on 30 June 2019, note that you may be approached by the regions mentioned above to help while they are in the process of recruiting. In these instances, it is preferred that the hearings are done by video conference.

Review of Decision process trial in the Southern Region

Service Delivery is looking at how we can improve the Review of Decision process for clients and staff. **As part of this we're testing some changes to the Review of Decision process in the Southern region which include:**

- having a fully independent staff member manage the Review of Decision from start to finish
- changes to simplify the steps staff follow when investigating and attempting to resolve cases for clients
- **minor changes to letter templates to reflect the different process steps we're testing**
- a simplified Report of the BRC

The results so far from client experience have been positive.

Appeals to the Social Security Appeal Authority

The period in which an appeal is to be lodged with the Social Security Appeal Authority has changed. Previously, the period was 3 months from the receipt of notification of the decision, and it is now 60 working days (approximately 12 weeks).

A change to the Tribunals Powers and Procedures Legislation Act 2018 amended section 400 of the Social Security Act 2018 which details the period in which an appeal must be lodged with the Social Security Appeal Authority.

Wellbeing Budget 2019

As part of Wellbeing Budget 2019, the Government announced a significant investment in MSD and the mahi we do to help New Zealanders be safe, strong and independent. MSD will receive extra funding of around \$1.3 billion over the next four years. This means that in the new financial year (2019/20) the Government will spend almost \$27.83 billion through Vote Social Development on social support and services for New Zealanders. This investment is going across a wide range of areas over the next four years. Below are some of the key initiatives.

Welfare overhaul

- **Addresses some of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group's recommendations, at an overall cost of more than \$600 million over four years, by:**
- indexing main benefits to the growth in net average wages
- lifting abatement thresholds for those on benefits who work, in line with minimum wage increases
- **removing deductions from benefits for sole parents who don't name their child's other parent (April 2020)**

Employment assistance

- Up to 263 new frontline MSD staff to help people into sustainable work – \$76.3m
- 1,850 extra places in the Mana in Mahi employment programme – \$49.8m

Family violence and sexual violence

- Family violence and sexual violence initiatives (as part of the multi-agency Joint Venture) – \$124m

Communities, children and youth

- Resolve claims by people who have experienced abuse in state care – \$93.7m
- Establish independent monitoring of the state care sector for children and young people – \$18.9m
- Cost pressure funding for contracted service providers – \$24.9m

Seniors

- Enhance the SuperGold Card through a new app and website, and better promotion – \$7.7m
- Allowing working ACC weekly claimants near to and over 65 to receive Superannuation or the Veteran's Pension – \$9m

- **Modernising and simplifying Superannuation and the Veteran's Pension**

Disabled people and those with health conditions

- Support around 2,600 people to find and stay in meaningful employment, increase their knowledge and skills, and improve their health and wider wellbeing – \$26.3m
- **Strengthen MSD's Office for Disability Issues to improve support and advocacy for disabled people – \$6.4m**

MSD core operating model and infrastructure

- Address cost pressures in our operating model, such as remuneration and accommodation, and reduce risk in critical IT systems – \$398m

Further information can be found on the following link:

<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/budget/2019/index.html>

Welfare Expert Advisory Group Report

The Government has released the Welfare Expert Advisory Group's recommendations for the future shape of New Zealand's welfare system.

Further information can be found on the following link:

<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/weag/index.html>

Performance Monitoring feedback

Every month our team at National Office complete a check of a sample of Review of Decision reports of Service Delivery, to check whether they are in line with national standards. The feedback from these checks is sent to BRC coordinators to be forwarded on to all panel members.

If one of your cases was sampled, you should receive the feedback for this.

Social Security Act 2018

A reminder that if you need help with writing reports with the new legislation, our team are available to help you with this.

Handy references

The following page has useful links and information about the ROD/BRC process including the expense claim form, information packs and the HIYU newsletter:

<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/contact-us/complaints/review-of-decision.html>

Feedback

Please let us know if you find these newsletters useful or if there is other information that you would like included in these. The Complaints Management Team welcomes any feedback from you. The team's **contact details are below.**

For more details contact

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