



[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 14 March 2019 requesting, under the Official Information Act (the Act) 1982, the following:

- 1. I request any documents or guidelines relating to helping case managers or receptionists assess client eligibility for Special Needs Grants for food.*
- 2. I request any documents or guidelines relating to the training of receptionists at Work and Income when it comes to assessing people's needs.*

The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) is one of New Zealand's larger government departments employing people in over 200 locations around the country to provide services to over one million New Zealanders each year. It is important that people can access information about the financial assistance that is available and the eligibility requirements for it. As such, the Ministry publishes its manuals and procedures on the Work and Income website at: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/index.html).

Information specific to the Special Needs Grant is available at: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html).

More information about food grants is available on Work and Income's website at: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html).

When assessing eligibility for a Special Needs Grant for food, staff will use a version of this, which is on the Ministry's intranet. The difference in versions is minimal and all information about assessing eligibility is available at the web link above. There is a small amount of additional information on the intranet, such as directions for inputting information in our computer systems, which is not available on the external website.

I am unable to provide you with any information regarding documents or guidelines relating to the training of receptionists at Work and Income when it comes to assessing people's needs under section 18(e) of the Act as no information exists. Where a Service Centre has a specific "Receptionist" role, it is not the receptionist who will assess people's needs. They may assist a client to understand their eligibility, complete any relevant application, and ensure they have sufficient information for an assessment to be made. Depending on the nature of assistance applied for, when an application is made, it is usually a Case Manager, contact centre staff, or staff from the Centralised Processing Unit who will assess the application.

Where clients don't understand or agree with a decision, they are able to apply for a Review of Decision (ROD). Information regarding the ROD process can be accessed on the Work and Income website: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/review-of-decisions.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/review-of-decisions.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 available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter 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 guidelines for assessing eligibility for Special Needs Grants for food, 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.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Cassandra Wise

**Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery**