



23 November 2022

Tēnā koe

On 14 October 2022, your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) was transferred from Whaikaha – Ministry for Disabled People to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) for response. You requested the following information:

1. ACCESS

- *What are the current methods whereby families with a disabled child can access the CDA?*
- *Is data matching done to proactively administer CDA to all those entitled?*
- *Why is it that "You can't get a Child Disability Allowance if you get board payments from Oranga Tamariki for the child."*  
<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/child-disability-allowance.html>

2. PROMOTION

*How is CDA promoted to:*

- *Families with a disabled child?*
- *General practitioners?*
- *Other medical practitioners?*

3. WHO GETS IT

- *How many children are receiving the CDA?*
- *Is there a break down by:*
  - *Ethnicity?*
  - *Age?*
  - *Health district or other measure of locality?*
  - *Reason for disability?*

4. VALUE

- *What is the basis for the dollar amount of the CDA?*
- *When was it last increased?*
- *Is it indexed to wages?*

## 5. WHO MAKES THE DECISION

- *Can MSD or WINZ staff override the decision of a medical practitioner that a child is entitled to the CDA?*

For the sake of clarity, I will answer your request in sections.

Child Disability Allowance (CDA) is a non-taxable allowance that is available to the principal caregiver of a dependent child who has a serious disability. It is paid because of the extra care that may be needed by a child who has a physical, sensory, psychiatric or intellectual disability.

### 1. Access

- *What are the current methods whereby families with a disabled child can access the CDA?*

To access CDA, the adult caregiver of a dependent child with a serious disability must fill out an application form in addition to having a medical certificate completed by the child's health practitioner.

Completed documentation can then be submitted to the client's nearest Work & Income office for processing of the application. If additional documentation is required to complete the application, clients can be advised of this at the time of providing the application to the Work & Income office. In some cases, completed documentation can be uploaded through MyMSD.

Face-to-face appointments are only required for applicants not receiving on-going payments to ensure that full and correct entitlement is assessed.

If the client meets the qualifications, CDA is granted from the date of application or the date of eligibility, whichever is the later.

- *Is data matching done to proactively administer CDA to all those entitled?*

In keeping with privacy rights of medical patients, the Ministry does not receive information from healthcare providers on people who might be eligible for CDA. The Ministry's Health and Disability teams provide ongoing education and support to General Practitioners (GPs) to increase awareness of the support offered by the Ministry in the health and disability space, including CDA.

- *Why is it that "You can't get a Child Disability Allowance if you get board payments from Oranga Tamariki for the child."*

In order to receive CDA, a child must be either in the direct care of the recipient or at a home or hostel where the primary caregiver pays toward the child's care and the child returns home for weekends or school holidays. As such, it cannot be paid when a child is in the care of Oranga Tamariki.

In preparing this response it was noted that the statement quoted above in your request could be rephrased to better align with practice and provide a clearer explanation as to why CDA is not payable to those receiving board payments from Oranga Tamariki. The page below has now been revised accordingly: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/child-disability-allowance.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/child-disability-allowance.html)

## 2. Promotion

*How is CDA promoted to:*

- *Families with a disabled child?*

CDA is not overtly promoted to families with disabled children. Campaigns have been run for the purpose of directing people to the 'Check What You Might Get' calculator which covers a wide range of supports people may not realise they are eligible for, including CDA.

- *General practitioners?*
- *Other medical practitioners?*

As already mentioned, the Ministry's Health and Disability teams provide ongoing education and support to GPs via conference presentations and attendances, meetings with their local General Practices and responding to practice enquiries.

The Ministry is also involved in an ongoing education programme alongside the College of GPs and NZ Locums which centres around educating medical practitioners about available funding supports, including CDA.

## 3. Who gets it

- *How many children are receiving the CDA?*
- *Is there a break down by:*
  - *Ethnicity?*
  - *Age?*
  - *Health district or other measure of locality?*
  - *Reason for disability?*

Please note CDA is paid to the adult caregiver of a dependent child with a disability, not directly to the child. As such, Ethnicity and Territorial Local Authority (TLA) breakdowns are based on those of the adult caregiver.

You will find the following tables attached in **Appendix One** in response to your request:

- **Table One:** Child Disability Allowance by adult caregiver, broken down by Total Ethnicity Response as at quarter ending 30 September 2022.
- **Table Two:** Child Disability Allowance by child age as at quarter ending 30 September 2022.
- **Table Three:** Child Disability Allowance by adult caregiver age as at quarter ending 30 September 2022.

- **Table Four:** Child Disability Allowance by Territorial Local Authority as at quarter ending 30 September 2022.

Please note, we are unable to provide a specific breakdown of reasons for disabilities as this information is held in individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

In order to satisfy the intent of your request, I have instead provided you with a breakdown of CDA by disability type (mental, physical, physical and mental and not recorded). You will find this information in the following table attached in **Appendix One:**

- **Table Five:** Child Disability Allowance by disability type as at quarter ending 30 September 2022.

#### **4. Value**

- *What is the basis for the dollar amount of the CDA?*
- *When was it last increased?*
- *Is it indexed to wages?*

The current dollar amount for CDA is based on the recommendation of the 1972 Royal Commission of Inquiry into Social Security, which proposed a non-means-tested rate of \$8 per week. This recommendation was adopted at the proposed rate when reintroduced in 1978, with the current rate reflecting annual adjustments for inflation.

CDA was last increased through the 2022 Annual General Adjustment, bringing it to the current rate of \$52.79. CDA is indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

#### **5. Who makes the decision**

- *Can MSD or WINZ staff override the decision of a medical practitioner that a child is entitled to the CDA?*

Medical practitioners do not decide who is entitled to receive CDA. They may suggest clients to apply and complete a medical certificate to support them in their application.

In situations where the information on the medical certificate is not clear enough to determine eligibility then advice can be sought from the Regional

Health Advisor or Regional Disability Advisor. Information on determining a serious disability can be found at the following links:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/child-disability-allowance/guidelines-when-determining-a-serious-disability-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/child-disability-allowance/guidelines-when-determining-a-serious-disability-01.html)
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/child-disability-allowance/information-on-specific-conditions-and-disabilitie-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/child-disability-allowance/information-on-specific-conditions-and-disabilitie-01.html).

In cases where a CDA application is declined, the client has the right to have this decision reviewed by the Medical Appeals Board. More information on this process can be found here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/reviews-and-appeals/medical-appeals-board.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/reviews-and-appeals/medical-appeals-board.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 and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry'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, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



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