Appendix One

Decisions under delegated authority of the Minister for Social Development and Employment

Mandatory reviews

1 I agreed to modifications to the extensions, exemptions and exceptions regimes that already exist for mandatory reviews of universal benefits. The following changes apply to independent benefits introduced in the Bill:

1.1 **Extensions**: The same extension settings as in the Social Security (Mandatory Reviews) Act 2025 will apply except for the Special Benefit (as the Special Benefit is a temporary discretionary benefit). MSD may grant the client an extension of no more than 20 working days if they have a good and sufficient reason for not being able to confirm their circumstances before their review due date.

1.2 **Exceptions (domestic):** Exceptions for domestic clients will be similar to those in the Mandatory Reviews Act. However, when a client receives CS, OSCAR or SpB there are no exceptions. When a client is receiving OB or UCB there is no exception to being in hospital care for more than 13 weeks or in residential disability care or rest home care.

1.3 **Exceptions** (overseas): Exceptions will also apply to overseas clients with the intent that exception situations will be similar to those for domestic clients to ensure equity. However, I note they will not mirror exactly due to the overseas context. For an overseas client to qualify for an exception, they must be residing in or present in (and are unable to reasonably leave) the relevant area. They must also be affected by the relevant circumstances, at any time from the date of notification until the client's original mandatory review date.

1.4 **Exemptions** (domestic): The regime for domestic clients (excluding CS, OSCAR and SpB) where an exemption could be applied will be the same as provided for in the mandatory reviews scheme. MSD can decide whether a review is appropriate based on their individual circumstances (for example, the client has died). This is a higher threshold than extensions.

1.5 **Exemptions** (overseas): For overseas clients the overseas context should be considered when determining whether MSD is satisfied that a mandatory review should not be undertaken based on the client's circumstances.

Suitable engagements

2 I agreed that suitable engagements, introduced in mandatory reviews, will also apply to OB (domestic) and UCB. This is when a client has an interaction with MSD where the same information is provided as their mandatory review, and MSD can push the review date out 52 weeks. Only manual suitable engagements will apply (where a staff member completes a full review of someone's circumstances).

Medical reviews

3 I agreed that from 30 November 2026, MSD will require all clients applying for a benefit on medical grounds to provide a medical certificate (for JS-HCID, SLP-Carer

or DA) or other medical evidence (for SLP-HCID or CDA). I agreed that under new settings, all clients receiving a 'medical benefit'[13] will be required to provide another medical certificate or other medical evidence before their medical coverage ends in order to continue receiving the relevant medical benefit (i.e. a 'medical review').

4 Sometimes clients might not be able to respond to their medical review on time due to external factors like availability of medical appointments or cost [SOU-25-MIN-0052 refers]. In these circumstances, it is reasonable to provide clients extra time to respond to their medical review, up to 40 working days. A client must contact MSD prior to their medical review date in order to receive an extension. MSD will exercise discretion to determine whether a client has a good and sufficient reason for requiring an extension.

5 In some specific circumstances clients, both domestic and overseas, may be affected by exceptional circumstances that make it impractical or impossible for them to complete their medical review on time even if given an extension. I have agreed to a deferral regime that will apply on a cohort basis for people affected by specific events. The deferral will be for up to 52 weeks. This will require approval from Cabinet at the time of the event.

End of school year

6 The Bill includes provisions that will change the process for when clients have a child turning 18 and for the end of the school year. When a child included in a caregiver's benefit is turning 18,[14] MSD will be required to exclude the child on their 18th birthday.[15] MSD will notify the client at least 20 working days (where practicable) before the child's 18th birthday. The child will be automatically excluded using ADM unless MSD is satisfied, based on the information provided by the client, that the child is financially dependent and in education.

7 If MSD is satisfied that the child is still financially dependent and in education, a staff member will determine how long to continue to include the child until the end of the school year (no later than the start of the pay period following 31 December of the year they turn 18). A child may also be reincluded on or after their 18th birthday if the client subsequently provides the required information. If the client does not respond by the review date, the child will be automatically excluded.

8 If a client is receiving Emergency Benefit, SpB, or Jobseeker Support on grounds of hardship, or Community Costs, MSD will notify the client at least 20 working days prior to the child turning 18 that the client is required to respond to a review of their circumstances to determine if they remain eligible and what rate of assistance should be paid. If the client does not respond to the review, their benefit will be suspended at the beginning of the next pay period after their child's 18th birthday. If the client responds to the review and their child is included for a period on or after their 18th birthday, the client must respond to an additional review before the future child exclusion date (generally the end of the school year) to check if they are still eligible

[13] Child Disability Allowance, Disability Allowance, Jobseeker Support on grounds of Health Condition, Injury or Disability, Supported Living Payment on all grounds.
[14] This means that the child is a dependent child (primarily the responsibility of the client, maintained as a member of the family, and financially dependent) and the child has an effect on the caregiver's rate of benefit.
[15] All child exclusions and resulting rate changes, suspensions or cancellations will take effect from the beginning of the next pay period.

for their assistance and the rate payable. If they do not respond to the additional review, their benefit will suspend automatically.

9 If the client is receiving a benefit and the child turning 18 is their last or only dependent child, and their benefit requires a child to be included in order to be eligible, that benefit will be suspended when the child turns 18 or when the child is no longer considered dependent (generally at the end of the school year) whichever is applicable.

10 If a client is receiving DA paid on behalf of a child, who is not receiving UCB or OB, and no other DA is payable to the client, the assistance will be cancelled as part of the end of school year process. This will happen as the outcome of a child exclusion when the child turns 18, or at the date the child is no longer considered dependent (no later than the start of the pay period following 31 December).