



13 AUG 2018



Dear 

On 24 June 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How was the VHN amount of \$17000 determined?*
- *Has there been any review since that amount was set (apart from the latest one, to accommodate the new Pay Equity Legislation)?*
- *Does the Legislation specifically exclude the purchase of necessary items needed to provide the activities covered by the Legislation on VHN funding?*
- *Is there a Memorandum of Understanding and any other type of agreement between Ministry of Health and MSD on which Ministry covers the Personal Care support needs of those receiving VHN funding in order for them to engage in community participation and generally during what is considered day hours?*

The amount of Very High Needs (VHN) funding of up to \$17,000 per person for Vocational Services for Very High Needs School Leavers, as outlined in the Cabinet Business Committee paper previously provided to you on 17 April 2018, has not been reviewed since it was set in 1999. This amount is determined by:

- a daily rate for provision of participation or employment services
- multiplied by the number of days per week the person is able to participate in the service
- multiplied by the number of weeks of service participation during the year.

For example, a participant who receives a daily rate of \$65.18 and participates in the service for five days per week for 48 weeks will receive funding of \$15,643.20.

When the Ministry's VHN funding was established in 1999, the individual funding level took into consideration that school leavers with very high needs may need personal care while participating in vocational services. As a result, the funding was set accordingly at a level significantly higher than that of other Ministry funded services.

There is no legislation that specifically includes or excludes the purchase of items needed to provide activities for VHN funding recipients. This detail is set out in the Ministry's policy regarding funding for VHN clients that provides services to support them to participate in activities, services and facilities that are part of everyday life. Personal care support is provided by people and excludes the provision of physical supports such as equipment or health products.

The Ministry's VHN services do not extend to the purchase of equipment. The service specification notes that the provider's role is to facilitate and/or support people to participate in their communities in ways that are meaningful to them, and enhance their quality of life and mana.

The Ministry of Health funds health-related services for people with a disability that meet eligibility criteria, including personal care. While there is no Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development on which agency funds personal care for people participating in the community and generally during the day, the Ministry of Health has a policy of not funding personal care for people while they are using Ministry of Social Development vocational services such as VHN programmes, community participation and business enterprises.

The Ministry of Health is responsible for the funding of equipment for care needs. Information about how the Ministry of Health can support your equipment needs is available on their website on www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/types-disability-support/equipment-and-modifications-disabled-people/equipment-disabled-people.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health contracts Needs Assessment and Service Coordination services (NASCs) which allocate Ministry-funded disability support services and help with accessing other supports. NASCs work with disabled people to outline what disability supports are available and determine their eligibility for Ministry-funded support services. Further information regarding NASCs are available on www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/getting-support-disability/needs-assessment-and-service-coordination-services.

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 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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding VHN funding for Vocational Services for Very High Needs School Leavers, 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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelvin', followed by a long horizontal stroke that extends to the right and then curves slightly upwards.

Kelvin Moffatt

General Manager, Service and Contracts Management