



28 SEP 2020

Dear

On 31 July 2020, the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) received a partial transfer of your request, made under the Official Information Act 1982, from the Ministry of Health. The part of your request that was transferred to the Ministry is for the following information:

- *How much money has been spent on mental health since the allocation of a record \$1.9 billion for mental health in last year's Wellbeing Budget 2019? Please fill in the missing information in the attached excel spreadsheet, which outlines the Wellbeing Budget items for mental health broken down by year. Please populate with information relating to how much has been allocated by year and the total spent so far.*

On 28 August 2020, the Ministry advised that the time period required to respond to your request needed to be extended, and that a response would be provided to you no later than 30 September 2020.

Please find attached a spreadsheet detailing the financial amounts for the mental wellbeing initiatives being led by the Ministry which were listed in the Wellbeing Budget 2019. Where the information can be provided, the spreadsheet shows the original estimates as published by the Treasury, alongside the actual figures received by the Ministry that have either been spent in the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 financial years or have been forecast to be spent in the current, and next two financial years.

Please find more information on each Ministry related initiative listed in the Wellbeing Budget 2019 below.

**Disabled People and People with Health Conditions Improving Employment and Wider Wellbeing Outcomes**

I can confirm that the figures for all five financial years as listed in the Wellbeing Budget 2019 that relate to this initiative were received by the Ministry.

As reflected in the spreadsheet, the amounts received in relation to all five financial years have either been spent or have been forecast to be spent by the Ministry over the current and following two financial years.

The funding for this initiative has provided additional capacity for the Ministry's contracted employment service, particularly for mental health support.

### **Housing Support Products: Expansion to Help More People Access and Maintain Tenancies**

I can confirm that the figures for all five financial years as listed in the Wellbeing Budget 2019 that relate to this initiative were received by the Ministry.

The Ministry is unable to provide information in relation to the specific dollar amounts that have been spent or have been allocated to be spent in the five noted financial years, as the Ministry only holds the total expenditure for finances relating to this initiative centrally.

The funding for this initiative has been broken up and spread throughout many different parts of the Ministry. To identify which portions of funding have been allocated to which areas of the Ministry, and which of those amounts have either been spent or have been allocated to be spent constitutes as substantial collation and research. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

However, I can advise that the funding for this initiative has been spent on assessing and reviewing eligibility for public, transitional and emergency housing and income related rent. The funding has also been put towards managing the Public Housing Register and the provision of products and services to help families with children who are living in emergency housing accommodation and who have received, and remain eligible to receive, Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants. These grants are paid in accordance with criteria set out in, or in delegated legislation made under, the Social Security Act 2018.

### **Maintaining and Strengthening the Housing First Programme as a Response to Ending Homelessness**

Although this initiative is led by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry can confirm that the amounts noted in the Wellbeing Budget 2019 were received.

The amounts received in relation to all five financial years have either been spent or have been forecast to be spent by the Ministry over the current and following two financial years. The money has been used and allocated as an increase in funding toward the Accommodation Assistance, benefit expenditure in relation to the provision of social housing.

### **Historical Abuse While in State Care: Resolving Claims**

I can confirm that the figures noted in the Wellbeing Budget 2019 were received by the Ministry in relation to this item. However, the \$93.8-million-dollar amount does not specifically relate to funding for mental health support. The Government has invested \$93.8 million over three years to enable claimants of abuse in state care to have a sense of justice, validation and empowerment. This funding increases staffing and supports changes to the Historic Claims process that enables the Ministry to respond to and settle more claims and provide appropriate support to claimants.

The Historic Claims initiative assists claimants to access counselling and link them in with other services where necessary. Where ACC or community support options are not appropriate for the claimant to access, Historic Claims will fund counselling sessions for claimants. I can advise that Historic Claims has funded a total of \$7,540 (excluding accruals) in client counselling costs during the 2019/2020 financial year.

The Ministry does not have a specific counselling budget in relation to this initiative, and we are unable to advise on counselling costs for the budget outlined for the financial years 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist. Counselling will be provided to clients as and when it is required, and the individual costs will be taken from the budget for this initiative.

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 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, 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Bull', written in a cursive style.

Dr Simone Bull  
**Director Service Delivery**  
**Deputy Chief Executive's Office**