



14 November 2022

Tēnā koe

On 17 October, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Any information produced by MSD relating to the impact of Long Covid*
 - *This includes, but is not limited to, information related to the employment impact of Long Covid and information related to the impact of Long Covid on demand for benefits*
 - *This also includes, but is not limited to, information related to the impact of Long Covid outside of New Zealand (for example any information produced by MSD which relates to overseas assessments of the impact of Long Covid overseas)*
- *Where any document falls under the scope of this request, please release it in full, including sections which might otherwise be considered out of scope.*

Depending on the person's circumstance, someone who has Long COVID may be able to apply for Jobseeker Support with deferred work obligations or Supported Living Payment.

Whether they can get these payments will depend on their capacity to work, including when they would be able to work again. This is determined by their health practitioner, who would provide a medical certificate advising how long the person would be unable to work as result of their condition. They must also meet an income and asset test, which also applies to their partner if they have one. The criteria for granting a benefit is laid out in the Social Security Act.

A person who is disabled, injured or has a health condition lasting longer than six months may also be able to get a Disability Allowance. This is a payment for people who have regular, ongoing costs because of a disability,

injury, or health condition. This can include costs such as visits to a doctor, medicines, or travel to appointments. This payment is income tested against both the person's income and their partner's if they have one. You don't have to be getting a benefit to qualify for a Disability Allowance.

For more information on the criteria for those who have a health condition, injury or disability, please see this link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/client-has-a-health-condition-injury-or-disability-01.html

People can also find out more about they may be eligible for through Work and Income's online eligibility tool: www.workandincome.govt.nz/online-services/eligibility/index.html

The Ministry has not produced any information relating to the impact of long COVID. As such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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 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.

If you are not satisfied with this response relating to the impacts of long COVID, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Saunders

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Manager Issue Resolution
Service Delivery