



23 June 2023

Tēnā koe

On 25 May 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

Request for Official Information

1. Please provide a statement or any other information to confirm, clarify or otherwise contradict the accuracy of what is stated on the below website under the heading "Rental equipment".

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.workandincome.govt.nz%2Fmap%2Fincome-support%2Fextra-help%2Fdisability-allowance%2Frental-equipment-01.html&data=05%7C01%7CEden.Brown016%40msd.govt.nz%7C8cf41bafea6f4cefb07308db5fb840fc%7Ce40c4f5299bd4d4fbf7ed001a2ca6556%7C0%7C0%7C638209017185485942%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6I6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yATtVy0VpTxeQxR3eF%2F6i%2FYxyp8tOsKITfptVgYvBEY%3D&reserved=0>

---quote begins---

Rental equipment

Disability Allowance can be paid for necessary rental equipment when the client:

- has a need for the item or service but cannot receive funding through the District Health Board or another state funded agency and*
- their life or health would be put at risk, or their disability aggravated if they could not hire the equipment because the expense was not included in their Disability Allowance*

---quote ends---

2. Please provide a statement or any other information to confirm, clarify or otherwise contradict the accuracy of what is stated on the

below website under the heading "Assistance available from Work and Income", in particular regarding "Ongoing hireage of a breast pump".
<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.health.govt.nz%2Four-work%2Flife-stages%2Fbreastfeeding%2Fhealth-practitioners%2Fwork-and-income-assistance-available-buying-or-hiring-breast-pumps&data=05%7C01%7CEden.Brown016%40msd.govt.nz%7C8cf41bafea6f4cefb07308db5fb840fc%7Ce40c4f5299bd4d4fbf7ed001a2ca6556%7C0%7C0%7C638209017185485942%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWlIjoIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6IjE6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Ho%2BgbBt7A%2Bp15ICkuAbdvgJizaeBTXu8SCy4CGnycuI%3D&reserved=0>

---quote begins---

Ongoing hireage of a breast pump

If the mother or child has an ongoing disability and requires a breast pump in order to provide breast milk for the child the cost of the ongoing hire of a breast pump may be included in the calculation for:

- *Disability Allowance*
- *Temporary Additional Support, if the applicant is already receiving Disability Allowance and if the applicants ongoing disability costs exceed the maximum rate of Disability Allowance.*

---quote ends---

If the information referred to above (1 and 2) is ostensibly correct:

3. *Please confirm if any Work and Income client has ever had the ongoing hireage of a breast pump included in the calculation for their Disability Allowance, where their personal circumstances fulfilled the necessary criteria.*

4. *Please provide data (for the most recent period available) across 10 years showing the total number of clients who have had "ongoing hireage of a breast pump" included in the calculation for their Disability Allowance; or failing that, had "rental equipment" included in the calculation for their Disability Allowance.*

Finally...

5. *Please provide any other relevant information, policies, advice, and internal guidelines and communications, regarding accepting or declining "ongoing hireage of a breast pump" as an allowable cost for Disability Allowance, particularly any considerations by internal specialist Health and Disability Advisors.*

You will hear further from the Ministry's Correspondence team regarding questions 1 and 2 of your request, if you haven't already.

The Ministry will now respond to parts 3-5 of your request.

3. Please confirm if any Work and Income client has ever had the ongoing hireage of a breast pump included in the calculation for their Disability Allowance, where their personal circumstances fulfilled the necessary criteria.

4. Please provide data (for the most recent period available) across 10 years showing the total number of clients who have had "ongoing hireage of a breast pump" included in the calculation for their Disability Allowance; or failing that, had "rental equipment" included in the calculation for their Disability Allowance.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, The Ministry refuses your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

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

5. Please provide any other relevant information, policies, advice, and internal guidelines and communications, regarding accepting or declining "ongoing hireage of a breast pump" as an allowable cost for Disability Allowance, particularly any considerations by internal specialist Health and Disability Advisors.

Requests for the support of ongoing hireage of a breast-pump would be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and a decision determined on the request meeting benefit criteria. Where clinical guidance is required, this is sought from and provided by the Regional Health and Disability team. The assessment can also be referred to National Office for further clinical and operational policy advice as needed. Please refer to the publicly available information which outlines guidance when assessing these costs, here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/disability-allowance/rental-equipment-01.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 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 regarding hireage of breast-pumps through disability allowance, 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

PP Gurika N

Bridget Saunders
Manager
Issues Resolution
Service Delivery