



7 April 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 10 March 2025 requesting information about health insurance or benefits offered by the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) to staff.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

- *Does your organisation offer any health insurance benefits to your staff, where the agency contributes financially?*

Since 2006, the Ministry has provided health insurance benefits to staff employed on the Manager, Senior Specialist and Senior Manager employment agreements (via Health and Wellbeing policy).

In addition, the Southern Cross Health Society (Southern Cross) is the Ministry's preferred health insurance provider. The Ministry has a Southern Cross work scheme which entitles all staff (irrespective of employment contract type) access to reduced premiums. This is an employee-led benefit direct with Southern Cross so the Ministry does not track uptake.

- *Can you summarise what you offer?*

The Health and Wellbeing policy provides for:

- Health and Wellbeing payment - An annual health insurance contribution of up to \$750 net (\$1,150 gross) per annum will be made towards the costs of private medical insurance policy with the Ministry's preferred provider or with a recognised health insurance provider of the employee's choice. This is processed in December each year.
- Biennial health screening - This is lump sum amount (\$85 gross) processed in December on alternate years. This amount is reviewed in line with the biennial cycle.

- *Can you provide a percentage of staff which have taken up the offer broken out by year from 2014 to present.*
- *If there are factors which may have impacted rates - e.g. a new offer, please provide context.*

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing the following tables:

- **Table One:** Percentage uptake of the Health and Wellbeing Payment for Manager Senior Specialist and Senior Manager positions from 2014 to 2025, broken down by year.
- **Table Two:** Percentage uptake for the biennial health screening from 2014 to 2024.

The Health and Wellbeing Payment has an average 62% uptake since 2006. In 2023, this payment (via changes to Manager and Senior Specialist Collective Employment Agreement) widened to include temporary managers and moved to the \$750 net (\$1,150 gross) amounts used.

For the biennial health check, there have been different delivery mechanisms over the years which may have impacted uptake – this has involved having clinics onsite, using a voucher and/or invoice system for reimbursement at a preferred provider and lump sum reimbursement on acknowledgement of eligibility. The lump sum reimbursement has a greater level of uptake.

In 2021 and 2022, there were two types of payments delivered as part of the Service Delivery / National Office Ministry of Youth Development / Work and Income Northland Staff Terms of Settlement for staff who joined during the year. This was not a feature during subsequent years. Payments were \$70 net (grossed up to \$110).

Please see attached **Appendix One** containing **Table Three** showing the number of Wellbeing Payments made to staff during 2021 and 2022. The Ministry is unable to provide a percentage breakdown of eligibility for these payments.

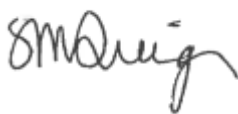
The Ministry does not track the uptake for employees who choose to access the reduced premiums offered by Southern Cross. As such, this information is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as this information is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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. 

Anna Graham

General Manager

Ministerial and Executive Services

Appendix One

Table One: Percentage uptake of the Health and Wellbeing Payment for Manager Senior Specialist and Senior Manager positions from 2014 to 2025, broken down by year.

Year ended 30 June	Eligible	Claimed	% claimed
2014	724	465	64.2%
2015	772	496	64.2%
2016	763	461	60.4%
2017	699	426	60.9%
2018	754	422	56.0%
2019	738	446	60.4%
2020	879	473	53.8%
2021	879	473	53.8%
2022	953	525	55.1%
2023	1103	575	52.1%
2024	1259	654	51.9%
2025	1221	636	52.1%

Notes:

- These figures only include staff working for the Ministry of Social Development. For example, it does not include staff who later moved to Oranga Tamariki when their agency was formed in 2017.
- For year ending June 2023 onwards, Temporary Managers are included in the total following a Collective Employment Agreement.
- Please note, the claim period to end of June 2025 year has not yet completed.

Table Two: Percentage uptake for the biennial health screening from 2014 to 2024.

Year	Eligible	Onsite checks	Vouchers issued	Vouchers used	% checked
2014	929	118	95	27	15.6%
2016	830	88		23	13.4%
2018	767	-	113	54	7.0%
2020	Reimbursement programme though Synergy Health used. Note that we can confirm the 2020 biennial health check was implemented for eligible staff, however, are unable to confirm up uptake (by %) as that information is not held by the Ministry.				
2022	989	-	-	917	92.7%
2024	1221	-	-	698	57.2%

Notes:

- For 2014 and 2016 data, this includes staff members who later moved to Oranga Tamariki when their agency was formed in 2017.
- For some years, the Ministry does not have information available relating to on-site clinics.
- For 2022 and 2024, these figures relate to a one-off payment on confirmation of health-related spending.
- For 2024, the claim period has not yet ended.

Table Three: The number of Wellbeing Payments made to staff during 2021 and 2022.

Year	Number of payments made
2021	8686
2022	8156

Notes:

- Payments include make up payments paid to staff who joined during the year.