



25 February 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email dated 24 January 2025. On 27 January 2025, your email was transferred from the Minister for Social Development and Employment's office to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry). The transfer occurred because the information that you have requested is held by the Ministry and is more closely connected with the functions of the Ministry.

You have requested any information regarding procedures for assessing eligibility for Supported Living Payment.

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

General information about the Supported Living Payment (SLP) is publicly available on the Work and Income website, we are providing the link to this resource here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/supported-living-payment.html

SLP is for people who are not able to work because they are:

- permanently and severely¹ restricted in their capacity for work because of a health condition, injury, or disability or totally blind (medical) or
- caring for a person who requires full-time care and attention at home (caring for someone)

The Ministry is required to assess and determine that the person applying for SLP meets the relevant qualifications.

¹ The definitions of permanently and severely are publicly available on Map, the link is provided here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/definitions/permanently-and-severely.html. The definition of severely mentions open employment. Open employment is any employment that is not sheltered employment. Sheltered employment is defined here on Map: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/changes-and-reviews-supported-living-payment/sheltered-employment-01.html

More information about the qualifications is available on the publicly available Map website², we are providing the link here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/qualifications.html

General eligibility qualifications apply regarding age and residency requirements. Additional qualifications and related procedures depend on whether the reason the client is applying is on the grounds of their medical circumstances or caring for a person.

More information about the general qualifications is available on the publicly available Map website, we are providing the links here:

- Age: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/age-01.html
- Residence: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/residence-01.html

Permanently and severely restricted in their capacity for work or totally blind – SLP (medical)

To qualify medically for SLP the client needs to be either:

- both permanently and severely restricted in their capacity for work because of a health condition, or injury or disability, from an accident or condition they have had since birth, or
- totally blind.

When applying for SLP on grounds of their medical circumstances, the client can provide either a medical certificate or suitable existing assessments from their registered medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or psychologist.

The Ministry will use the medical information provided, as well as other relevant information that the Ministry holds, to determine whether the client meets the medical qualification for SLP. It will also be used to assess whether the client should be given simplified access to SLP.

For more information about the medical qualifications, medical certificates, existing assessments, and the use of all information available, please refer to the following resources which are publicly available on our Map website:

- Medical qualifications: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/medical-qualifications-01.html
- Deciding Supported Living Payment from a medical certificate: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-

² Our Manuals and procedures (Map) website is publicly available and provides operational policy guidelines to Ministry staff based on the legislation administered by the Ministry. More information about Map can be found on the Map website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/about/index.html

[benefits/supported-living-payment/deciding-supported-living-payment-from-a-medical-c-01.html](https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/deciding-supported-living-payment-from-a-medical-c-01.html)

- Deciding Supported Living Payment using existing assessments: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/deciding-supported-living-payment-using-existing-a-01.html
- Use all information available: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/use-all-information-available-01.html

Simplified access

Some clients with a specific diagnosis can access SLP (medical) without having a detailed assessment of their capacity to work, including that the requirement to provide medical evidence is kept to a minimum. For example, a diagnosis that may qualify for simplified access includes clients who are totally blind, or who are terminally ill with a life expectancy of less than 2 years.

Before the Ministry decides to grant simplified access, this is referred to the Regional Health Advisor or Regional Disability Advisor for advice.

More information about simplified access to SLP is available on the publicly available Map website, we are providing the link here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/simplified-access-to-supported-living-payment-01.html

Caring for a person who requires full-time care and attention

A client applying for SLP (caring for someone) must provide full-time care and attention to a person (other than their partner), at home who would otherwise need:

- hospital care
- rest home care
- residential disability care
- care of the kind referred to in section 141 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, which is extended care services provided for severely disabled children and young persons care of an equivalent kind.

A medical certificate completed by a registered medical practitioner or nurse practitioner is needed in every case. The Ministry will use this information to assess and determine that the client meets this qualification for SLP.

For more information about Caring for a person and Proof of care please refer to the following resources which are publicly available on our Map website:

- Caring for a person: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/caring-for-a-person-01.html

- Proof of care: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/proof-of-care-01.html

Referral to a designated health practitioner

For both SLP (medical) and SLP (caring for someone), the Ministry may need to refer the client (or the person being cared for) to a designated health practitioner, nominated and paid for by the Ministry, for further assessment. For example, when eligibility to SLP is unclear from the medical information they have provided.

In some situations, the case manager can refer a client directly to the designated health practitioner. For example, when the medical practitioner has indicated a second opinion is appropriate. Where a case manager cannot directly refer, the case manager must first seek advice from the Regional Health Advisor or Regional Disability Advisor.

More information about Referral to a designated health practitioner (SLP medical) is available on the publicly available Map website, we are providing the link here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/referral-to-a-designated-health-practitioner.html

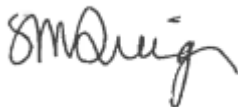
I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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

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Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services