



14 November 2025

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 29 September 2025 requesting information about the eligibility criteria for vision impairment services provided by the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry).

- *What is the vision or vision impairment service eligibility criteria for all MSD services for example:*
  - *Benefits*
  - *Allowances*
  - *Disability support services*
  - *Can I please have access to any policy, procedural, or guideline documents that set the service eligibility criteria.*

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

Your request asks about vision or vision impairment service eligibility criteria. As benefits and allowances are income supports, rather than services, we consider them to be outside the scope of this request.

The Ministry provides funding to providers and organisations that offer services for disabled people and people with health conditions lasting longer than six months who need additional support with community participation, inclusion and employment. People with vision impairment related barriers will also be eligible for this assistance if they meet the eligibility criteria. You can find information about these services, including eligibility criteria, at the following links on the Ministry's website:

- [www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/disability-services/community-participation-services.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/disability-services/community-participation-services.html)
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/work/find-jobs/how-to-choose-the-right-job/employment-services-provider-list.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/work/find-jobs/how-to-choose-the-right-job/employment-services-provider-list.html)
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/work/working/payments-to-help-you-at-work/job-and-training-support-funds.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/work/working/payments-to-help-you-at-work/job-and-training-support-funds.html)

In addition, Disability Support Services provides a Children's Spectacles Subsidy. This subsidy is to help families with the cost of spectacles (assessment, frames, lenses, eye patches) for eligible children 15 years of age and under. To be eligible the parent/guardian or child must have a valid community services card, or the child must have a current high use health card. The subsidy is available to the person annually.

The following documents set out eligibility criteria for this service:

- Service Specification: Provision of Children's Spectacles Subsidy:  
[www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Service-Specification-Provision-of-Childrens-Spectacles-Subsidy1.pdf](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Service-Specification-Provision-of-Childrens-Spectacles-Subsidy1.pdf)
- Children's Spectacle Subsidy Manual Clinical Guideline:  
[www.enable.co.nz/tools/forms/childrens-spectical-subsidy-manual-clinical-guideline](http://www.enable.co.nz/tools/forms/childrens-spectical-subsidy-manual-clinical-guideline)
- MSD Disability Support Services Operational Policy – DSS Eligibility, reviewed 13 December 2024. This document is publicly available at the following link:  
<https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/official-information-responses/2025/march/17032025-the-eligibility-criteria-for-dss-and-policies-or-documents-supporting-criteria-decision-making.pdf>

Disability Support Services also provides Specialist Vision and Rehabilitation Services to help Blind and Deafblind people to live safely and move around their home and community. This includes white canes provision and other services such as teaching adaptive daily living skills and orientation and mobility skills.

The following contract documents relate to this service:

- [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Specialist-Vision-Assessment-and-Rehabilitation-Services1.pdf](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Specialist-Vision-Assessment-and-Rehabilitation-Services1.pdf)
- [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Tier-One-Service-Specification1.pdf](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Tier-One-Service-Specification1.pdf)

Kāpō Māori Aotearoa provides wrap around support from a cultural perspective. The service enables people to seek cultural advice and guidance at each stage of the vision loss journey and to access specialist vision services (provided through Blind Low Vision) in a way that gives confidence and *maanaki*. The service provides cultural support for Kāpō Māori to engage with mainstream specialist vision services and provides ongoing assistance to plan and navigate supports for a person and their *whānau*.

The following contract documents relate to this service:

- [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Tier-two-Kapo-Maori-Final-2022-V1.1-Dec-20221.pdf](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Tier-two-Kapo-Maori-Final-2022-V1.1-Dec-20221.pdf)
- [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Tier-One-Service-Specification1.pdf](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Tier-One-Service-Specification1.pdf)

Vision Assistive Technology is equipment to support the needs of a person who is blind, deafblind or who has a significant vision impairment to overcome their impairment.

Eligibility criteria are set out in the DSS Equipment Manual (section 11.3, page 58)

- [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Equipment-manual-V21.pdf](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Equipment-manual-V21.pdf)

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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp.



Anna Graham

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