



8 October 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 10 September 2025, requesting information from the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) on counselling sessions available through Historic Claims.

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.

- (a) *Since the introduction of the policy to provide funded counselling, how many claimants have requested funding for counselling sessions?*
- (b) *Of those claimants who requested funding for counselling sessions, how many were able to access funded counselling?*
- (c) *Were any funding requests for counselling denied? If so, on what grounds?*

Historic Claims has funded counselling for claimants since about 2014. To date, Historic Claims has processed approximately 444 requests for counselling from claimants. Around 30% of these requests have come from the same claimants asking for additional sessions.

I am refusing your request for the total number of claimants who have requested funding for counselling sessions and any funding requests denied under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information. This information would only be contained within individual claimant files, which would each require manual review to respond to your request. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

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

- (d) *What kinds of therapies/counselling supports were funded?*

I am refusing your request for this information under section 18(f) of the Act, on the basis that if held, it would be contained in individual claimant files. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

Claimants have no obligation to inform the Ministry of the reason they are seeking counselling.

However, based on some general notes recorded by Historic Claims staff, it is suggested that claimants may be seeking counselling for reasons related to psychotherapy, psychological assessments, tohunga, alcohol and other drug programmes. Please note, these notes can be subject to human error as they are written by staff and does not fully account for all the reasons a claimant may seek counselling.

(e) Did claimants have to find their own counsellor or did MSD provide support in finding a counsellor for them? What is the percentage of claimants who found their own counsellor compared with those claimants for whom MSD found a counsellor?

Claimants can choose their own counsellor. In some circumstances, Ministry staff may assess a claimant's capability if they are unable to choose a counsellor for themselves and as such may make recommendations.

I am refusing your request for the percentage of claimants who found their own counsellor compared with those claimants for whom the Ministry found a counsellor under section 18(f) of the Act as this information would be held in individual claimant files.

(f) How many counsellors are registered as suppliers with MSD? Can MSD please provide a list of these suppliers?

I am refusing your request for a list of counsellors who are registered as suppliers with the Ministry under section 18(f) of the Act as this information is not centrally recorded. In order to provide you with this information, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources.

However, I have provided you with a list of counsellors that have provided counselling services in the financial years 2024/25 – 2025/26 below.

- Te Oho Mauri Counselling and Indigenous Healing
- Tammy Dickinson
- Solutions Therapy Limited
- Neil Pedley & Associates
- Narrative Pathways
- Meeting with Minds
- Living Well Counselling Centre
- LB Counselling Limited
- H&P – Wellness Therapy Limited
- Southern Trauma Centre
- Petersgate Counselling & Education Centre
- LP Chaplow
- Karen Keys
- Jo Knight Counsellor
- Jeannie Reader

- Everwell Therapy
- Empowered Life Limited
- E Radewald Limited
- Desktop Imaging Limited
- Clare Norton Counselling Limited
- Claire Thompson Counselling Services
- Claire James Counselling
- Weave Hawke's Bay Incorporated

(g) Is there any eligibility criteria for people wishing to register as a supplier with MSD to provide counselling services to historic abuse claimants?

As the Ministry advised you via email on 1 August 2025, there is no eligibility criteria, but it is expected that they are qualified counsellors/therapists.

(h) What is the rationale behind MSD's policy to not include any information about funding for counselling for historic abuse claimants on its website?

The Ministry has no policies regarding counselling and supports. I reiterate the Ministry's response sent to you on 1 August 2025 that *"The wellbeing space" is developing as the Ministry continues the work on consistent support offerings with the Crown Response Office and other agencies. The Ministry hopes to update the website with relevant information in the near future.*

(i) What is the rationale behind MSD's policy to not make these funded counselling sessions available to people who are incarcerated? Can MSD please provide any policy documents or internal communications related to this decision.

The Ministry does not have a policy to not fund counselling sessions for claimants who are incarcerated. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist.

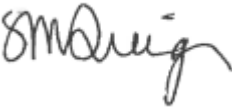
I recommend you contact Department of Corrections if you have any specific questions in regard to counselling sessions available to people who have been incarcerated.

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. 

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