



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Ministry of Social Development, Bowen State Building, Bowen Street, Wellington 6011, PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140
• Telephone: 0-4-916 3300 • Facsimile: 0-4-918 0099

11 APR 2012

Ms Nicole Skews
requests@fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Skews

Thank you for your email of 5 March 2012 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

“any and all information, including but not limited to: reports, correspondence, research, cost benefit analyses and drafts, on the provision of contraception for beneficiaries either produced or commissioned by the Ministry of Social Development from January 1 2010 to present.”

In December 2011 and in February 2012 the Government announced details about the proposed changes to New Zealand's welfare system. These new proposals redesign benefits for young people to improve their outcomes and recognise that older beneficiaries can and do want to work. Stage one changes will impact on the Emergency Maintenance Allowance, Domestic Purposes Benefit, and Widow's Benefit.

The Welfare Working Group recommended that women on benefit should be assisted to decide whether they want to have children and under the new reforms Cabinet has agreed to provide financial assistance for women to choose an approved Long Acting Reversible Contraception. The assistance will help with the additional costs of accessing these forms of contraception where they are not already covered elsewhere, for example through Ministry of Health subsidies. Assistance will be available initially for youth when the youth package is introduced from 30 July 2012 and will later be available to other beneficiaries as wider welfare reform changes are implemented. The relevant legislation was introduced into the House on 19 March 2012.

You have asked about the provision of contraception for beneficiaries. Please note that the proposals are not aimed at providing contraception to beneficiaries, but to help women on benefit with the additional costs of accessing long-acting reversible contraception so they can plan when they have children.

A suite of Cabinet papers relating to details of the 27 February 2012 announcements has been made publicly available on the Ministry of Social Development's website. You may be particularly interested in viewing the following paper:

- *Paper C – Welfare Reform: Parents on a benefit who have subsequent children.*

Page 1 of 2

This paper seeks agreement on policy details to implement the proposal that where parents have additional children while receiving a benefit, their availability for work expectations will be based on the age of their previous youngest child, once their new born turns one year of age.

Detailed information about the estimated costs has been withheld from the paper under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act as it is subject to Budget 2012 considerations.

You can find the paper at the following link:

www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/media-releases/2012/welfare-reform-announcement.html.

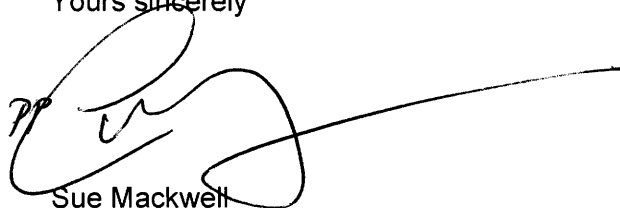
I am withholding a small number of emails and draft policy templates that specifically relate to this assistance under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982. These documents contain free and frank policy advice, and I consider it to be in the public interest that such expressions of opinion should continue to be supplied to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs. The documents also contain legal advice that I am withholding under section 9(2)(h) of the Act in order to maintain legal professional privilege.

I believe that the public interest in these policies is satisfied by the Cabinet papers that have been released online.

I hope you find the information in the publicly available documents useful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsmen
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sue Mackwell', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Sue Mackwell
Deputy Chief Executive, Social Policy and Knowledge