



6 DEC 2018

Ms Catherine Greenwood
fyi-request-9021-1bfa3d1d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Greenwood

On 8 November 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many Deaf/Hard of Hearing people have been allocated NZ Support Funds (for Job support) each year, since 2013, for the purposes of paying for NZSL interpreters?*
- *Of those numbers, how many per year actually depleted their Job Support Funds?*
- *Of those that ran out of Job Support Funds, how did the Ministry of Social Development support those clients to continue being able to carry out their employment duties for the remainder of the year?*
- *Why has the figure of \$16,900 per year been fixed since at least 2006?*

Job Support provides assistance to disabled people and people with a health condition for the costs incurred in their employment that would not be incurred by a non-disabled person.

Workbridge administers Support Funds on behalf of the Ministry and has authority to approve funding up to \$16,900 per applicant, over a 52 week period from the time of their application. This amount aligns with all supports available through Work and Income assistance via the Employment and Work Readiness Assistance Programme. You are correct that there has been no increase in budget since 2006.

When a person has depleted their allocated funding, they can request additional funding from Workbridge. The request for additional funding will be forwarded to the Ministry which has discretion to approve funding above this amount. All requests for additional funding were approved for all applicants who applied.

The below table provides information regarding Support Funds applications for interpreter services for the financial years ending 2013 to 2018. Note that applications do not necessarily align with the Ministry's funding for each financial year, but all applicants and additional funding requests are captured.

Financial year	Interpreter services individuals	Number requesting additional funding	Number additional funding approved
2012/13	269	0	0
2013/14	186	0	0
2014/15	290	0	0
2015/16	260	1	1
2016/17	265	3	3
2017/18	303	6	6

The Ministry has provided you with the number of people who have requested and received additional funding to identify the number of people who have depleted their allocated funding, however the Ministry has no oversight of people who may have depleted their allocated funding and not applied for additional funding. Workbridge only records and reports on the number of clients who deplete their allocated funding and request additional funding within their 52 week funding period. As such I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that any consolidated information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation subject to the Official Information Act.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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 this response concerning Support Funds for interpreter services, 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.

Yours sincerely



Cassandra Wise
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery