



Office of Hon Paula Bennett

Minister for Social Development
Minister of Youth Affairs

8 JUN 2012

Kurt Sharpe
fyi-request-220-a8488676@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Sharpe

Thank you for your email of 8 May 2012 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

information or documentation that outlines the predicted cost of the recently announced policy of free/subsidised birth control for people on benefits.

The welfare reforms that the Prime Minister and I announced on 1 November 2011 will fundamentally change our benefit system; transforming it into a modern, active, work focused system that identifies and realises individuals' work capacity.

You may be aware the Welfare Working Group recommended better access to free long-acting reversible contraception for parents receiving welfare. This has been addressed in a broad package of supports included in the first phase of welfare reforms. Because cost can be a barrier to accessing Long Acting Reversible Contraception, Cabinet agreed to provide financial assistance for women who choose this option. As such, assistance will be available through the Ministry of Social Development that 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.

This 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.

You have asked about the policy of free/subsidised birth control for people on benefits. 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.

You may be interested in viewing the following paper:

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

This paper seeks agreement on policy details for assistance with long-acting reversible contraception, including the proposals 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.

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.

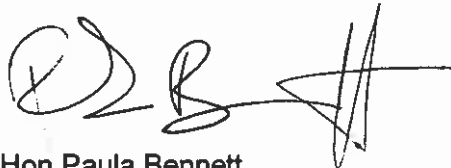
The core Budget documents, including the information relating to the financial support for access to contraception are publicly available on the Treasury website at:

www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/2012.

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 read 'P. Bennett', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hon Paula Bennett
Minister for Social Development