



13 February 2024

Nessy Rose

fyi-request-25283-d34466c5@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2324-1369

Dear Ms Rose,

I refer to your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) received on 22 December 2023 requesting the following information from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (Ministry):

“Under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) provisions, I am requesting access to specific guidelines and related information used by Immigration New Zealand. This request focuses on the criteria and procedures employed by Medical Assessors, Immigration Officers, or the Health Assessment Team in evaluating health-related conditions for immigration purposes. The specific details I seek are the most recent guidance notes concerning:

- 1. Skin-Related Conditions: Skin Lesions (including minor lesions) Skin Cancers General Skin Conditions Additionally, I request the typical medical costing &/or treatment list used to treat any of these skin conditions.*
- 2. Hearing Impairments: Partial Hearing Loss*
- 3. I would appreciate details on the total number of Medical Waivers issued under the Parent Resident Visa Category for the period between and including 2019 - 2023, with a breakdown by month. This request aims to comprehensively understand the assessment criteria, processes, and associated costs for these health conditions.”.*

Our Response

Point one - Skin-Related Conditions

The only Immigration New Zealand (INZ) guidelines which provide guidance on how to evaluate skin related conditions are contained in a document called ‘ASH Conditions’ which is used by Immigration Officers in the Health Assessment Team. This document assists Immigration Officers in determining whether a condition can be considered as minor in nature. This document is enclosed as **Appendix one**.

Please note that ‘ASH’ stands for Acceptable Standard of Health. If a visa applicant has a condition on this list, they would ordinarily be determined as having an acceptable standard of health. There are various skin related conditions on this list, but other skin conditions which are not included on this list, would be assessed on a case-by-case basis by INZ’s Medical Assessors in light of their own experience as practising doctors.





There are no typical medical costings or treatment lists relevant to skin conditions. Medical Assessors would be guided by any advice provided to them by the applicants' themselves via specialist reports. In some cases Medical Assessors may be able to obtain medication costings from PHARMAC's website.

Point two - Partial Hearing Loss

INZ holds information about how to assess hearing impairment in multiple documents as listed below:

- The 'ASH Conditions' document (**Appendix one**) notes that an applicant with either 'deafness in one ear only' or 'partial deafness' would ordinarily be determined as having an acceptable standard of health.
- The INZ Operational Manual which is available on INZ's website provides the following guidance in respect of assessing resident visa applicants with hearing impairment:

The following content has been extracted from the INZ Operational Manual for the purpose of responding to your specific request for information regarding how hearing impairment is assessed by INZ.

- **A4.10(c)** The conditions listed in A4.10.1 are considered to impose significant costs and/or demands on New Zealand's health and/or special education services. Where an immigration officer is satisfied (as a result of advice from an Immigration New Zealand medical assessor) that an applicant has one of the listed conditions, that applicant will be assessed as not having an acceptable standard of health.
- **A4.10.1** Medical conditions deemed to impose significant costs and/or demands on New Zealand's health and/or education services
 - Severe (71-90 decibels) hearing loss or profound bilateral sensori-neural hearing loss after best possible correction at country of origin, where significant support is required, including cochlear implants.

The Guidelines for Medical Assessors: Special education needs and Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) funding (version 4 September 2022) provides information about how to assess applicants for resident and student visas who have special education needs due to a range of impairments.

The document Cochlear Implants - Information for INZ Medical Assessors (version 1 October 2017) contains information about assessing applicants who may require cochlear implants. This document is currently being reviewed and rewritten as it may not reflect current costs and other information in this document may no longer be relevant.

The Guidelines for Medical Assessors and the Cochlear Implants document are also enclosed in **Appendix one**.





Point three – Number of medical waivers issued under the Parent Resident Visa between 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2023

Decision	Assessment outcome	Month / Year	Number of applications
Approved	Not ASH	July 2023	1
Approved	Not ASH	November 2023	5
Approved	Not ASH	December 2023	1
Total			7

Please note: There were no decisions made from 2019 to 2022.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact inzoias@mbie.govt.nz.

Richard Owen
General Manager – Immigration Risk and Border
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

