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Anna Wilson  
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21 June 2024

Tēnā koe Anna

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 5 June 2024, to the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha (the Ministry), requesting information relating to the changes to Purchasing Rules made on 18 March 2024.

I have answered each part of your request in turn.

- 1) *I am requesting the number of flexible funding applications that Whaikaha has approved for overseas travel, massages, hairdressers, pedicures, tobacco, alcohol, and lotto tickets. I request that the number be broken down into these sub-categories.*

The Ministry has been provided with some examples of instances where funding was used for items such as pedicures. The Ministry does not collect this information centrally, as the data captured through our invoicing system does not contain detail about items purchased to this degree of specificity.

This part of your request is therefore refused pursuant to section 18(f) of the OIA, as it would require substantial research and collation.

- 2) *The examples of Flexible Funding applications for the above categories that Whaikaha provided to the then-Minister for Disability Issues Hon Penny Simmonds.*

Please find attached a copy of the email chain that references lotto tickets, cigarettes and alcohol, which was provided to the previous Minister for Disability Issues' office ahead of Hon Simmonds speaking in the House on 28 March 2024. The Ministry provided a snapshot of six month's funding available through personal budgets.

It is important to note that the Ministry provided this information as background for an Oral Parliamentary Question. The information was provided in raw form without context and caveats due to time constraints.

When looking at the information attached, please note:



- The tables contain raw data that has not been adjusted to exclude issues that have been resolved, declined or referred to auditors for investigation. This raw data helps identify situations that need to be looked into further, such as cases where people have inadvertently mixed their own money in with direct funding.
- Personal Budgets do not have to be hosted; the disabled person can choose to have a Host or not. In this particular instance, the Personal Budgets table contains data about Personal Budgets that had no Host, meaning no Host Provider approved the spending.

A small amount of information has been withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 9(2)(a) - to protect the privacy of natural persons.
  - 9(2)(ba)(i) - to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.
- 3) *Any examples of Flexible Funding applications for the aforementioned categories that Whaikaha has provided to the new Minister for Disability Issues Hon Louise Upston*

The Ministry has not provided Minister Upston with this type of information. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the documentation alleged to contain this information does not exist.

- 4) *All correspondence between Whaikaha and Minister Simmonds' office, including the Minister herself and all her Ministerial and departmental staff, relating to Flexible Funding*

No correspondence between the Ministry and Hon Simmonds within the scope of your request has been identified. The Ministry provided Hon Simmonds with information about flexible funding in briefings, and at officials meetings. The Ministry has proactively released relevant briefings, and action points arising from officials' meetings on our website, here: [Responses to OIA Requests | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](#)

There is email correspondence between the Ministry and Minister Simmonds' office on the subject of flexible funding. The Ministry provided advice on how to respond to Written and Oral Parliamentary questions. These emails are withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty. The responses to Parliamentary Questions are publicly available on the parliament.govt.nz website.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, or if you are seeking any further information, please contact [OIA\\_requests@whaikaha.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_requests@whaikaha.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EMW', with several horizontal lines above and below it, suggesting a signature on a document.

Emma Williams  
Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services