



- 1 APR 2016

14/04/2016

D Dahya
fyi-request-3709-81c70f2b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear D Dahya

Thank you for your email of 3 March 2016 requesting information from the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry). The Chief Executive has asked me to reply on his behalf. I will provide information to each of your requests and questions in turn.

1. What is the process where a job seeker requests support from MSD for a particular job application eg reference, endorsement and any other support that can be offered?

The Ministry does not provide endorsements for job seekers. However, there is a range of seminars and workshops that the Ministry delivers to help clients in their job search, for example, but not limited to, work search support, CV preparation, cover letters and job interview skills. As part of the Ministry's Investment Approach for managing the likeliness of long-term welfare dependency, Work and Income provides clients with the following assistance:

- Work readiness assistance training and courses, which aim to improve client outcomes, is discretionary and specifically designed for clients at risk of being long-term benefit recipients. You can find information about this assistance at:
<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/index.html>.
- Employment Transition Assistance for clients who are successful in securing a job interview. You can find information about this assistance at:
<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/employment-transition-assistance/index.html>.

In the first instance, clients should approach their local Work and Income office and, depending on their individual circumstances, assistance may be provided by Work and Income to assist with their job application or job search activities.

2. Is the process the same if the job is within MSD itself or outside of it?

Yes – refer to Question 1 above.

3. Is there legislation under the Social Securities Act that obligates MSD to support job seekers/beneficiaries in their job hunting activities?

The Social Security Act 1964 does not require the Ministry to provide unlimited support to jobseekers and other beneficiaries in their job search activities. However, in September 2012, the Ministry announced the development and implementation of the Investment Approach and the actuarial valuation of the welfare system.

For the Ministry to better understand the ways in which to target support, an actuarial valuation has revealed the life time costs of those on different benefit types and the effect of policy changes on the benefit system. The investment approach takes a long term view of each individual given their needs, challenges and prospects of a quick return to work.

The Investment Approach is about helping people to engage in paid work as the best way to reduce the risk of poverty for families. For this reason, the welfare reforms included a new, work-focussed approach with a focus on what people can do rather than what they cannot do. I am pleased that we are seeing the benefits of these reforms. Thousands of New Zealand families are receiving a level of support and encouragement they have never had before, and are now in work.

In March 2014, pursuant to section 124(1)(d) of the Social Security Act 1964, the Minister for Social Development established the Employment and Work Readiness Assistance Programme to assist in the operation of the benefit system and associated interventions to improve employment and social outcomes for clients.

You can find information about this assistance at:

<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/legislation/welfare-programmes/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance-programme/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance-programme.html>

4. Would the following legislation be the relevant one and, if not why not?

'116C implies a duty on MSD to give assistance in some cases 1(a) to enable the provision of financial and other support as appropriate - (ii) to help people to find or retain paid employment;'

When the Ministry determines the most appropriate activity to improve a client's work readiness or prospects for employment, we need to be sure that the support we provide will help complete this activity and thus avoid sanctions.

5. What is the process where the Benefit Review committee refuses to correct a Benefit Review report (Outcome of decision) they knowingly produced as incorrect ie failed to record ALL attendees at the Benefit Review hearing etc?

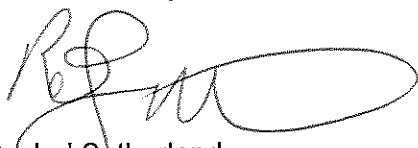
The Benefits Review Committee (BRC) always endeavours to provide a report which is transparent and which, as far as possible, accurately reflects the proceedings and deliberations at a BRC hearing. Should an error be found, the BRC would be required to correct it.

I hope you find this information helpful. 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 Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Email: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz
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Yours sincerely



Rachel Sutherland
General Manager
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