



31 MAY 2016

Mr Mike Woods
fyi-request-3977-ca626358@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Woods

On 6 May 2016 you emailed the Associate Minister for Social Development requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *A copy of the StudyLink Survey that recommended secondary school students do not require the Sussed financial presentations.*

On 11 May 2016, your request was transferred to the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development for response.

As you're aware in early 2014 StudyLink ceased the Sussed schools presentation programme and focussed its resources on developing the Sussed online tool. Although StudyLink is no longer being presented face to face in schools, StudyLink remains committed to the programme and it continuing to provide on-going support and resources to careers advisors and secondary school students.

I have enclosed a copy of the Ministry's response sent to Chen Palmer dated 15 July 2014, which provided statistics on the outcomes of the survey regarding the students satisfaction between those who had attended the Sussed presentation and those who had not. The response also explained the Ministry's decision to discontinue the in school Sussed presentations while continuing to provide the school career advisors with the information and resources to best inform the students.

You will note that the names of some individuals are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

I have provided you with a further explanation of the Ministry's decision to cease the in school Sussed presentations below.

There is no survey that recommends that secondary students do not require Sussed. The decision to move Sussed completely online was primarily based on the high cost of administering and delivering this resource intensive programme.

While an internal survey undertaken by StudyLink showed that students found the presentation valuable the results of independent research undertaken by our contracted market researcher showed no significant difference in awareness or behaviour between students who had attended a Sussed presentation, and those who hadn't.

Student Satisfaction Monitor Results.

StudyLink's student satisfaction monitor is a regular survey carried out by IPSOS, an independent research company. The student monitor is used to gauge student satisfaction with StudyLink's services. It also includes outcome questions, which help to determine StudyLink's impact in assisting new or prospective students to understand their entitlements and for those with student loans, to borrow only what they need.

Between July 2011 and December 2012, the results for these questions were broken down by whether or not a student had attended a Sussed presentation.

- 87 per cent of students who had attended a Sussed presentation agreed or strongly agreed that StudyLink provided them with a clear understanding of what they were entitled to from StudyLink, e.g. from a student loan, a student allowance or extra assistance, compared with 84% of students who had not attended a Sussed presentation.
- 85 percent of students who had attended a Sussed presentation agreed or strongly agreed that StudyLink encouraged them to only borrow what they need through the Student Loan scheme, compared with 83% of students who had not attended a Sussed presentation.

While the percentage of positive responses was higher from those who attended a Sussed presentation, the difference was not statistically significant. That is, compared with those who did not attend a Sussed presentation, those who did attend a Sussed presentation did not show significantly higher results in feeling that StudyLink provided them with a clear understanding of what they were entitled to, or encouraged them to borrow only what they need from the Student Loan Scheme.

I hope you find this information regarding the Ministry's decision to stop the in school Sussed presentation 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

Yours sincerely



Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Bowen State Building, Bowen Street, Wellington 6011, PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140 • Telephone: 0-4-916 3300 • Facsimile: 0-4-918 0099

15 JUL 2014

Section 9(2)(a) Privacy of Natural Persons

Intermediate Associate

Chen Palmer

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 5 June 2014 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

Please provide us with further information about the background to StudyLink's decision to withdraw the delivery of its Sussed programme in secondary schools. In particular, could you please provide us with the following?

- Information relating to the reasons for the decision to withdraw the programme
- A copy of the student survey conducted by StudyLink in 2013
- Information about the student survey conducted by StudyLink in 2013, including who participated in the survey and how and why participants were selected;
- Information about the results of the student survey conducted in 2013, including a summary of the results.

Overview

Sussed is the latest version of a programme first introduced in 1998 to encourage prospective tertiary students to think about their programme of study and how they will finance it, assess the commitments associated with taking out a student loan and paying it back, how they might contribute to their financial needs and what financial options they have available to them.

The programme is regularly reviewed to keep it relevant to students, both in terms of format and the technology used, and to reflect changes in the financial support available to tertiary students.

The current version, Sussed, was introduced in early 2011. Reflecting improvements to the StudyLink website and the fact that the majority of applicants were engaging with StudyLink through the online channel, the updated programme consisted of a presentation to be delivered in schools to Year 13 students by StudyLink staff and an interactive presentation on the StudyLink website.

The online tool has proved very successful, with over 32,339 page views in the 2012/13 year and a further 37,972 in 2013/14.

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Delivering the Sussed programme face-to-face is resource intensive to administer and run. It also does not align with StudyLink's online delivery model. In early 2013, StudyLink conducted a review of the effectiveness of its Sussed programme.

The review included assessing the results of specific outcome-related questions included in StudyLink's Student Satisfaction Monitor, conducted by IPSOS, an external, independent research company, and additional research conducted by internal StudyLink staff with first time students to assess the programme's overall impact on students' application behaviour and/or need for support.

IPSOS findings

IPSOS asked first time applicants two questions from the period July 2011 to end of December 2012. The table below shows the percentage of positive responses to those questions from people who attended a Sussed presentation compared to those who did not.

Student Satisfaction Monitor Questions	Percentage of first time applicants who attended Sussed and answered positively	Percentage of first time applicants who did not attend Sussed and answered positively
Did StudyLink provide you with a clear understanding of what you are entitled to?	87%	84%
Did StudyLink encourage you to only borrow what you need through the Student Loan scheme?	85%	83%

While overall the results were positive, there was only a marginal difference between the two groups. This difference is not considered statistically significant.

Student survey

A total of 379 students aged 18 years or younger who had applied for a Student Allowance and/or Student Loan in the period 1 January 2013 and 8 July 2013 were surveyed. The Ministry's Centre for Social Research and Evaluation confirmed that this number was sufficient to obtain a statistically valid result.

Of the 379 students, 110 had attended a Sussed session. A copy of the survey questions is attached for your reference.

The survey found that:

- Ninety-five per cent of the students who used Sussed Online stated that this met their information needs.
- A relatively low participation rate in Sussed from the surveyed students, however those who did participate, rated the Sussed programme valuable.
- There was more contact made by students to StudyLink from those who attended a Sussed presentation compared to those who had not, though the difference was not significant. Students who had not attended a Sussed presentation made contact with StudyLink on average 25.9 times. In comparison, students who had attended the programme contacted StudyLink on average 26.3 times.
- There were more early applications and less late applications lodged with those who were exposed to the Sussed Programme compared to those who were not.

Conclusions

While the research confirms that the Sussed programme did have a feel good factor and that there was overall satisfaction with it, this did not translate into any statistically significant difference in awareness or behaviour.

After analysing and considering the research, StudyLink concluded that the results did not warrant the on-going investment in the face-to-face programme and that the resources allocated to presenting this programme could be better used to improve the level of service to all students. This included enhancements at the Contact Centre and investing more in the online tools, based on student feedback.

Ongoing support to schools

Although Sussed is no longer being presented face-to-face in schools, StudyLink remains committed to the programme and to providing on-going support and resources.

The Ministry encourages students and their parents to access Sussed online through direct communications with schools. StudyLink is using on-going email communication through Careers Advisers throughout the year to promote the Sussed online tool:

- In April 2014, StudyLink emailed school Careers Advisers promoting the use of the online tool as a class exercise. The information included a link to the Sussed Online tool that could be sent to students and/or caregivers and text for school newsletters.
- In May 2014, an email was sent to schools in the main centres, to coincide with major Careers Expos to encourage them to visit the StudyLink stand. This message again included text for school newsletters and an email that could be forwarded to student and parent networks.
- Later this month, StudyLink will be supplying an updated version of its 'How to Apply' guide to Careers Advisers via email. This email will also include the offer of print material/flyers.
- In November 2014, StudyLink will provide Career Advisors with a final message, targeted at both students and parents, reminding them to apply for student support.

StudyLink has advertising stands at the major Careers Expos throughout New Zealand. It distributes hand-outs and promotional items to increase awareness and promotes Sussed Online at the expositions, through youth-oriented radio and online channels.

Sussed Online is also promoted through the StudyLink website, the Ministry for Youth Development Facebook page, as well as various twitter feeds. This is augmented with traditional print media placements in JET magazine. The Ministry is working on new initiatives to increase awareness and use of Sussed Online, including a dedicated Sussed Facebook page.

I hope you find this information concerning the Sussed programme 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

Yours sincerely



Susan Kosmala
General Manager – StudyLink

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Before the call

Establish from SAL whether the student has applied for SA, SL, living cost and if they have any current income re. Questions 4 and 6.

Opening the call

Hello, is *(student's name)* there please?

Hi it's *(SLO's name)* here from StudyLink, how are you today?

The reason I'm calling *(student's name)* is to ask, if you could kindly help us improve a service we provide at secondary schools and participate in a survey that should only take 10-15 minutes of your time. Is that ok?

[REDACTED]

Ask whether we could call back at a later time, thank them and end call.

[REDACTED]

Wonderful, before we continue

* Confirm 3 identifiers e.g. previous address, previous study details, date of birth

Introduction

Thanks *(student's name)*. To begin, do you know what Sussed is?

[REDACTED]

ask for clarification and confirm whether correct.

[REDACTED]

explain Sussed programme:

Sussed is when StudyLink comes out to your high school and presents what financial assistance you have available to you when moving onto tertiary study. This includes taking you through a budget activity to give you a fair idea of what expenses to expect. We then upon request by your school, return and provide assistance with applying online.

Does this sound familiar? Great [REDACTED] or Ok [REDACTED] let's continue:

Survey

1. What secondary school did you attend?
2. Did you attend a Sussed Presentation?
 - [REDACTED]
 - What year were you?
 - Before attending this Sussed Presentation, had you heard of StudyLink?
 - Before attending had you started to think about how to finance your tertiary study?

- Did this Sussed presentation prompt you to apply for StudyLink assistance?
- What was the most value you received from the Sussed Presentation?

[REDACTED]

- How did you know to apply for StudyLink Assistance?
- Do you think you would have been better prepared had you attended a Sussed Presentation?

3. Did you attend a Sussed Apply Online session?

[REDACTED]

- Was this helpful for you?
- What was the most value you received from the Apply Online session?

[REDACTED]

- Do you think you would have been better prepared had you attended a Sussed Apply Online session?

4. In relation to their SAL applications:

[REDACTED]

- Why have you not applied for SA?

[REDACTED]

- Why have you not applied for SL?
- Why have you not applied for living cost?

5. Did you apply for any Scholarships?

6. In relation to their SAL income:

[REDACTED]

How have you been supporting yourself?

- Parents
- Work
- Scholarships
- Savings
- Other – please state

7. Overall how valuable was the Sussed visit for you?

- Really valuable
- Valuable
- Neither valuable nor not valuable
- Not that valuable
- Not valuable

8. Was there anything else that you would have liked to have seen in the Sussed presentation?

9. Was there anything else that you would have liked from the Apply Online session?

10. What ethnic group do you belong to?

- European
- Maori
- Pacific Island
- Asian
- Other - please specify

Conclusion

Thank you (*student's name*). We've come to the end of the survey. Your assistance today will definitely help us develop a better strategy with our Sussed programme. Thank you again for all your time and help. Have a great day.

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