

Senior Services



SEPTEMBER 2011



A word from Merv

The International Day of the Older Person is rapidly approaching. We have activities happening around the country to mark the day. It is also an opportunity to

reflect on how we at Senior Services meet our clients needs.

Currently 588,000 clients receive New Zealand Superannuation or a Veteran's Pension. It is predicted that 107,000 people will move into the 65+ age group every five years between 2011 and 2041. To meet our clients' diverse needs we have to deliver information and services that are flexible, responsive and easy to access.

We offer a range of options to meet these needs. Clients can meet with staff at 84 permanent sites and another 54 satellite sites across the country. We have a dedicated Seniors Support Centre available to answer email and phone enquiries from New Zealand and overseas. Clients can request booklets, brochures or request home visits. They can also get information via our websites.

Underpinning our work is our Client Charter which tells clients what they can expect from us and about their rights as a client. It also

explains how clients can help us to provide them with a better service. Our Client Charter states that we will:

- listen and give seniors the right information
- be prompt, efficient and friendly
- explain what seniors are entitled to
- ensure seniors' privacy
- put things right
- put seniors in touch with other people who can help
- offer seniors information in their own language where we can
- respond to seniors' feedback, concerns and complaints
- be sensitive to seniors needs

If at any time a client has an enquiry about any of our services or needs more information please contact us.

Merv Dacre
Senior Services General Manager

View our Client Charter at:

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/seniorcitizens/your-rights/responsibilities.html>



MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Reciprocal arrangements for SuperGold Card with Australia



Discounts for seniors have gone trans-Tasman with reciprocal arrangements for the SuperGold Card with Australian state and territorial governments.

Under this initiative, both New Zealand's SuperGold and Australia's state and territory Seniors Card holders will be able to get discounts when travelling in Australia and New Zealand.

The arrangement will not include state or nationally funded initiatives such as the free off-peak travel available to SuperGold Card users in New Zealand. The Ministry of Social Development and its Australian counterparts will be encouraging businesses to provide discounts and special offers to cardholders travelling in Australia and New Zealand.

Our latest SuperGold email update containing information for seniors and the latest special offers was sent out to seniors in August.

To sign up or find out more about SuperGold special offers, clients can:

- visit SuperGold online and view the August newsletter and special offers at: www.supergold.govt.nz
- receive email updates on the latest offers by emailing their name, address, email address and client number to: seniors@msd.govt.nz

New Deputy Chief Executive



In July this year Mike Smith moved into the role of Deputy Chief Executive Students, Seniors and Integrity Services. Mike brings a wealth of organisational achievement and knowledge to this role. He has had a significant

career in the public sector holding leadership roles at a local, regional and national level implementing and leading significant service delivery strategies within the social sector.

Mike has previously held positions as Regional Commissioner for Social Development in the Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast region; General Manager Regional Operations in Wellington; General Manager Strategy and Service Development and more recently Deputy Chief Executive of Work and Income.

Quick and easy contact with Senior Services via email

Senior Services are using email to keep seniors informed about SuperGold updates and new offers, seniors-related information and new initiatives from MSD such as *My account* and applying online.

If you think this email service could benefit your clients and members we ask you to help us promote this service and its benefits.

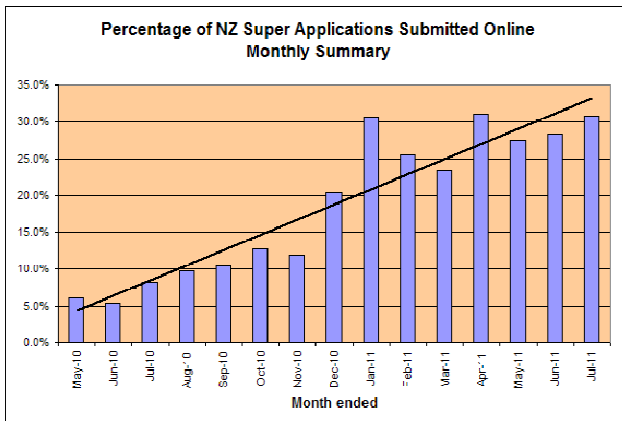
Email is also a quick and easy way for seniors to contact us and all of their details are private and confidential.

To receive email updates seniors can send their name, address, email address, and client number (on the back of their SuperGold Card) to seniors@msd.govt.nz

Increasing numbers of seniors applying online for NZ Super

As people are turning 65 they can apply online for NZ Super.

The online option is proving very popular as shown in the graph below, with over 30 per cent of NZ Super applications being submitted online in July 2011.



Filling in the application form online provides people with personalised information about:

- what they may be able to get
- what to do next
- what supporting documents they need to provide.

For some people this means they will not need to have an interview.

The application form, and other seniors-related information, can be found on our website: www.seniors.msd.govt.nz



Announcing *My account* for seniors

Senior Services have recently launched a new online service for our seniors clients called *My account*.

Seniors clients can use *My account* to:

- edit their own phone, fax and email address details held with Senior Services (physical addresses can not be changed at this time)
- view next regular payment details
- view a breakdown of payment rates including benefit rates, supplementary payments and deductions
- view future appointments.

If a client wants to use the new *My account* service we need their current email address.

The client can then create a user name and password to log into *My account*.

If we already have the client's email address and they want to use *My account* they follow the *My account* link from the Senior Services homepage at www.seniors.msd.govt.nz

If we don't already have the client's email address and they want to use *My account* then the client needs to email us their name, client number, address and their preferred email address to seniors@msd.govt.nz

Supporting local resources for older people

A personal perspective by Ursula Lewis, Senior Services Case Manager, Nelson.



I have been an Age Concern board member since 2000 and chairperson since 2009. This means I can represent the Ministry of Social Development and provide practical support to an organisation with limited resources.

The Nelson/Tasman region is recognised for its growing older people population and Age Concern Nelson Inc is a vital organisation for their wellbeing and representation.

Age Concern Nelson Inc is very busy assisting older people, friends, whanau, businesses and community organisations looking for advice or advocacy on a wide range of topics, including concerns of elder abuse and neglect, isolation, loneliness, health and financial hardship.

I maintain strong links with many other community organisations and in particular those supporting older people. In the last year my team and I have focused on increasing local resources for older people's wellbeing.

I work with the local Elder Abuse and Neglect Advisory Group to identify where the Ministry of Social Development can provide support and resources for current cases under investigation.

Our group also includes the Kaumatua for Age Concern Nelson, NZ Police, Public Trust

and Community Law who provide advice in relation to their field of expertise.

I recently represented the Ministry of Social Development and Age Concern Nelson at a professional development workshop hosted by Age Concern. The event was attended by approximately 100 people involved in the care or support of older people from the Nelson/Tasman Region.

The event was a huge success and provided a great opportunity to represent the Ministry of Social Development to both business and community organisations.

Celebrating Greats and Grands at a school near you in October



The Ministry of Social Development's Office for Senior Citizens has developed Link Age to encourage the exchange of knowledge and experiences between young and older people. Link Age provides simple online guidelines to set up intergenerational initiatives. Find out more about Link Age at the following web address:

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/planning-strategy/link-age/index.html>

The Office for Senior Citizens is keen to know about ways older people in communities help out in local schools, and any plans to celebrate **Greats and Grands** month in October or as they happen throughout the year.

Abolishing gift duty and the effect on benefits – Ministry of Social Development rules remain unchanged

Gift duty is a duty (a bit like a tax) charged on gifts of more than \$27,000 made by a person in any one year. The Government plans to abolish gift duty from 1 October 2011.

Inland Revenue administers a number of Acts, including the Estate and Gift Duties Act, which contains the requirement for gift duty.

That Act will be changed from 1 October 2011. The Ministry of Social Development administers entitlement to benefits, through the Social Security Act 1964, a completely separate Act.

Although gift duty rules will change, the Ministry of Social Development benefit rules will stay the same.

Key Points

- Abolishing gift duty is a change in the Estate and Gift Duties Act. There is no equivalent change in social security legislation.
- Entitlement to Ministry of Social Development benefits and subsidies is generally administered through the Social Security Act 1964, not the Estate and Gift Duties Act and not any taxation Act. There are key differences in how income is defined between these Acts. Income for benefit purposes is different to income for tax and duty purposes.
- The social security system operates on the principle that people should look to their own resources first before seeking assistance from the state.
- Under the Social Security Act, there is no 'allowable gifting' amount for general benefits. All available resources are required to be used to

help the client support themselves. This approach will not change with the abolition of gift duty. It is a separate Act.

- Residential Care Subsidies have a small amount of allowed gifting, per application. From 1 July 2011, allowed gifts will be \$6,000 per year per application (to 30 June 2011: \$5,500) for gifts made in any of the last five years, and \$27,000 per year per application for gifts made more than five years ago.
- The allowed gifting for Residential Care Subsidies is **not** changing as a result of the abolition of gift duty. Any amount over the allowed gifting may affect entitlement, depending on the figures involved.
- Because gift duty is being abolished, the Ministry of Social Development expects that more people will use gifting to manage their assets and finances. However, if clients gift assets to any party, they need to be aware that their entitlements to financial assistance could be affected.
- The Ministry of Social Development will continue to ask for documents from clients or third parties, to assess the impact that gifting has had on clients' entitlements to financial help through the Ministry of Social Development.
- It is important that clients seek legal advice before making decisions about their future if they are considering trusts. Clients are able to contact the Ministry of Social Development if they want to know how decisions will affect their entitlement to financial assistance provided by the Ministry.

If you need more information on allowed gifting and Residential Care Subsidies, please phone 0800 999 727.

Staff participate in Elder Abuse Awareness day

Senior Services staff around the country participated in a number of events to raise awareness of Elder Abuse during the recent Elder Abuse Awareness day.

Staff across the Taranaki / King Country / Whanganui regions wore the "Are You OK" campaign t-shirts, specifically to support Elder Abuse Awareness day.

The team also made a special effort to highlight available information, along with some stories about the types of abuse affecting our older people.



Front row: left to right: Senior Services Case Manager Michelle Ryan with Work and Income Family Violence Response Coordinator Lee Haskell. Back row left to right Senior Services Case Manager Adrienne Scott and Manager Local Services Operations Dierdre Fell.

Porirua Community Link Expo

The recent Porirua Community Link Expo attracted a range of organisations, including 30 current 'Community Link partners and other potential partners.

Everyone displayed their products and services with free giveaways and pamphlets, providing an array of colour brightening the normal office decor.



The Senior Services team provided a stand with information ranging from applying for NZ Super, to moving overseas, to knowing the difference between a SuperGold Card and a Community Services Card.

Volunteering is a great way to help your community

Volunteering is a great way to help your community while learning new skills, and keeping socially connected. It is fun and rewarding and giving some of your time can make a big difference to the lives of others. At the same time you get to meet new people and experience new situations and challenges. Read more on our website:

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/seniorcitizens/community/index.html>

Visit the Senior Services website



People needing seniors-related information can visit our website:

www.seniors.msd.govt.nz

Overseas pension information on the Senior Services website

New Zealand has eight bilateral social security agreements in place, with Australia, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Jersey and Guernsey, the Netherlands and the UK.

Over 90 per cent of all pensions deducted from New Zealand entitlement are from these countries. We have recently published improved information about overseas pensions on our website.

The new information provides answers to a range of questions that people may have about overseas pensions ie. how deductions are calculated, tax implications and what happens if a client goes overseas.

Our website includes information that is specific to the overseas pensions of each country with which New Zealand has a social security agreement.

This includes which overseas payments are deducted from New Zealand entitlements and other common questions and answers.

There are also links to the overseas agencies for further information and direct queries.

Read more about overseas pensions on our website; www.seniors.msd.govt.nz

Facebook promotion to seniors

Receiving NZ Super?



Keep up to date - send us your email address
www.seniors.msd.govt.nz

In July we ran two seniors ads as part of a Facebook trial for two weeks promoting our online services. With a potential audience of 115,440 members aged 64 and over, Facebook promotion is low-cost way to share

our messages with potential applicants and existing clients.

The ads encouraged eligible people to apply online for NZ Super and sign up to receive our email updates. During the two weeks the campaign produced positive results with the ads appearing on the pages of 61,313 people and 970 clicks through to the website.

Helping seniors keep in touch with technology



Social media, blogs, emails, Skype, TXTs and smartphones. People talk about them all the time, they're in the news, and are a big part of everyday life. With the pace of change though seniors can lose touch and feel completely left out.

SeniorNet is a community training network that supports and motivates people aged 50+ to enjoy and use technology in their everyday lives.

SeniorNet's Learning Centres throughout New Zealand help seniors learn how to search the internet, send emails, listen to music, enjoy digital photography, watch videos and communicate with people all over the world.

For more information:

Phone: 0800 736 467 (normal business hours)

Or visit: www.seniornet.co.nz

Caring for the Carer

Submitted by Kimberley Ebbett, Alzheimers New Zealand



Caring for your loved one with dementia or any other illness can be very rewarding, but it can also be all-consuming, requiring considerable personal sacrifice.

Caregiving requires time and energy and can be a hard and demanding task.

Therefore it is vital that carers look after their own health and wellbeing. This article looks at ways to help caregivers care for themselves.

- Get as much information about dementia as possible. Knowledge takes away the fear of the unknown, and helps you to face the reality. Speak to someone from your local Alzheimers organisation and ask professionals (such as your GP) and social service agencies.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. It can be easy for carers to underestimate their needs or fail to do anything about them or simply not know where to turn for help. Seeking help early and using the support services available will enable you to continue caring at home for longer.
- Respite services and day programmes are a great way for carers to have a much needed rest and break. Short-term care for a person with dementia is known as

respite care and this can be provided in the community or in a residential care facility. Day programmes can provide motivation and socialisation for people with dementia while providing respite for the carer. Day programmes are provided in different facilities. You can enquire about these by contacting your local Needs Assessment Team or your Alzheimers organisation.

- Join a support group. For many involved in caring, a support group is a great help. Contact your local Alzheimers organisation to find out details of support groups in your area.
- Take care of yourself. It is important that you stay physically and emotionally healthy. Be positive, your attitude can make a difference to the way you feel. Establish a daily routine in the household and try to stick to it. Try to take things one step at a time.

Your doctor is the first person you should contact if you are concerned about the person in your care or yourself.

Services such as day programmes, respite care and home help can be accessed after a person with dementia has been assessed by someone from their local Needs Assessment Team.

You can contact your local Needs Assessment Service directly or you can be referred by your GP or local Alzheimers organisation.

This article has been based on the Alzheimers New Zealand information sheet, Caring for the Carer.

For a copy of the full information sheet visit: <http://www.alzheimers.org.nz/resources> or phone: 04 381 2365.

To contact your local Alzheimers organisation please call 0800 004 001.