



09 MAR 2021

On 26 January 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. Has MSD received any online work capacity medical certificates in the months of December 2020 and January 2021, in which the answer to the question "is the person expected to have the capacity to work regularly in suitable and open employment (15 hours a week or more) within the next two years?" has been "no"*
- 2. Has this online form for doctors' use had any user experience testing since any changes were made to it, or since 20 December 2020, whichever is earlier?*

The Ministry uses a Work Capacity Medical Certificate to provide information to help determine a person's eligibility for a benefit. The medical certificate can also be used to determine if people on other benefits are unable to meet work-related obligations or to determine eligibility to Supported Living Payment on the ground of having a health condition, injury, or disability. These are completed by a recognised health practitioner and contain information about the client's medical conditions, capacity for work, duration they are expected to be unable to work, and their ability to undertake work-related activities.

I can confirm that the Ministry has received online Work Capacity Medical Certificates in December 2020 and January 2021 that indicate a client has no capacity to work regularly in suitable employment (i.e. for 15 hours a week or more) within the next two years.

That said, we are concerned to hear that you believe there may be a technical problem with these online forms. Your feedback has been passed on to the appropriate team at the Ministry for their consideration.

Regarding your second question, I can advise there is no formal user testing of online Work Capacity Medical Certificates as such. However, the Ministry has regular meetings with general practitioner representative organisations such as the New Zealand Medical Association, General Practitioners New Zealand, and the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners, who might suggest changes or improvements to the form.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,

- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response in regard to the online work capacity medical certificate, 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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

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