



16 April 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 20 March 2026, requesting information about the use of the Transition to Work Grant for tattoo removal. You requested:

- 1. The total amount of funding spent on tattoo removal under the Transition to Work Grant for each of the past three calendar years.*
- 2. The number of individuals who have received funding for tattoo removal in each of those years.*
- 3. Any guidance, criteria, or internal policy documents relating to the approval of tattoo removal under this grant.*
- 4. Any data, analysis, or internal reporting on the purpose of tattoo removal funding, including whether it is primarily associated with gang-related tattoos or used more broadly.*
- 5. Any information held on employment outcomes for recipients of tattoo removal funding (e.g. whether recipients subsequently obtained employment).*

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out below.

- 3. Any guidance, criteria, or internal policy documents relating to the approval of tattoo removal under this grant.*

Please find the paragraph below (including a link) to address this question in your request.

- Transition to Work Grant (Tattoo Removal Guidance)

Tattoo removal is not covered by separate or stand-alone guidelines within the Transition to Work Grant. It is considered as one of a range of costs that may be supported where it is necessary to help a person obtain or start employment.

As set out in [Assistance to transition into employment - Map](#) payment under the Transition to Work Grant is based on whether the cost is reasonable and necessary to support a client's transition into employment. Tattoo removal may be approved where there is a clear link between the removal and improving the client's ability to secure or begin work. While the guidance refers to supporting information, such as a referral from a medical practitioner, assistance is not limited to these circumstances.

All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Standard eligibility criteria for the grant apply, including income and asset thresholds and work-related requirements. The total amount payable under the grant is generally capped at \$1,500 within a 52-week period, across all approved costs.

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I am unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services