MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

24 July 2026

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your emails of 15 June and 14 July 2026 to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry), requesting information about self-employment assistance from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2026. As your requests are for similar information, I am providing you with one response.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request outlined below.

You requested data from 2018 to present covering the Business Training Advice Grant (BTAG), Flexi-Wage Self-Employment (FWSE) and Self-Employment Start Up (SESU) payments.

Please refer to the attached **Appendix One** for the following information:

- **Table One**: The number of approved Flexi-Wage Self-Employment or Business Training and Advice Grant contracts during the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2026.
- **Table Two**: The number of approved Flexi-Wage Self-Employment or Business Training and Advice Grant contracts for main benefit recipients during the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2026.
- **Table Three**: The number of approved Flexi-Wage Self-Employment (Wage Subsidy) and Self-Employment Start-up for main benefit recipients during the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2026.
- **Table Four**: The number of approved Flexi-Wage Self-Employment (Wage Subsidy) and Self-Employment Start-up for main benefit recipients during the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2026.

You also requested information on:

- *Number of applications for BTAG, FWSE and SESU received;*
- *Number of applications for BTAG, FWSE and SESU declined;*
- *Approved applicants' Qualifier for disadvantage and work capacity;*
- *Approved applicants' work capacity*

- *Approved applicants' past employment data*
- *Approved applicants' data on past benefit history prior to approval*
- *Business outcomes*

These parts of your request are refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. If held, this information would only be contained within individual client files, which would each require manual review to respond to your request. The Ministry does not track clients and outcomes of their benefit. 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.

Formal evaluations of programmes can be found in the Employment Assistance Evidence catalogue (EAC) on the Ministry website at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/effectiveness-employment-assistance/index.html.

The following links will have reports that relate to FWSE, BTAG and SESU:

- 26032025-a-breakdown-of-business-grants-in-the-past-five-financial-years-data.xlsx
- www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/evaluation/flexi-wage-expansion/evaluation-of-the-flexi-wage-self-employment-product.pdf
- 2021-employment-assistance-effectiveness-fy20192020-published-report.docx
- 2024-msd-employment-assistance-effectiveness-fy22.docx
- Annual Report - Ministry of Social Development
- Findings from the evaluation of the Flexi-wage expansion - Ministry of Social Development.

For people who take part in the Ministry's employment programmes, the Ministry **aims to evaluate** their outcomes using Statistics New Zealand's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). This involves assessing whether people who take part have better outcomes over time (like employment, income, education, or less contact with the justice system or welfare) compared to a group of people who look similar who did not take part.

Below are the effectiveness ratings for the programmes requested:

- BTAG is currently rated as 'Mixed.' This means that the programme has both positive and negative impacts on primary outcomes.

- FWSE is currently rated as 'Effective.' This means that the programme has a statistically significant positive impact on one or more primary outcome and there is no evidence of a negative impact on any primary outcome.
- SESU is currently rated as 'Not Feasible.' This means that it is not considered feasible to estimate the impact based on current data or available methods.

For programmes unable to be evaluated using this way, the Ministry uses a range of other methods; including outcomes-based evaluations, evidence briefs and international evidence on potential impacts and effectiveness. No alternative methods of evaluation have been conducted for these programmes since 2018.

Note that the EAC continually revises and updates the results of effectiveness evaluations for Ministry programmes, meaning the EAC may not align with historic reports of programme effectiveness.

In response to your request of 14 July 2026 for internal FWSE guidance, I have attached here with five documents marked as **Appendices Two to Six**. These are released to you in full.

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 this response, 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

Flexi-wage Self-employment

Welcome to the Flexi-Wage Self-employment homepage. This page provides an overview of Flexi-Wage Self-employment and links if you want more information.

Flexi-wage Self-employment Overview

Flexi-wage Self-employment (FWSE) replaced the assistance previously known as the Enterprise Allowance. The FWSE weekly subsidy payments are not included in the Employment and Work Ready Assistance Programme [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/legislation/welfare-programmes/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance-programme/index.html] (EWRAP), however the Self-employment Start-up and Business Training and Advice Grant (BTAG) are.

To be eligible for FWSE subsidy a person must be **both** disadvantaged in the labour market [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/deciding-if-a-client-is-disadvantaged-in-the-labour-market.html] and at risk of long-term benefit receipt [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/deciding-if-a-client-is-at-risk-of-long-term-benefit-receipt.html] .

To receive the FWSE subsidy, eligible applicants must have a viable business plan. MSD can provide support to develop a business plan through BTAG, of up to $5,000 per person, per project. $5,000 is the maximum payable BTAG amount that can be paid in a 52-week period.

The FWSE subsidy is paid at a set rate of $600 gross (GST inclusive), per week for 28 weeks ($16,800 in total). Under **exceptional circumstances** this may be extended up to a maximum of 52 weeks (less the 28 weeks already paid). FWSE can be pro-rated for those with part-time (or no) work obligations, but the self-employed person must be able to show they can support themselves from their earnings in time and not need a benefit. FWSE can also be paid to couples or groups wanting to start a business together.

The costs involved in starting a business can be provided for, under Self-Employment Start-Up, for up to $10,000 per business.

If an eligible person has a viable business idea and is motivated to start their own business, they should be given the opportunity to apply for self-employment assistance through the FWSE programme.

There is a Self-employment (BTAG, SESU and FWSE) eLearning module [https://ministry.plateau.com/learning/user/common/viewItemDetails.do?componentTypeID=Online%20Learning%20Module&componentID=EMPL%5fPROD%5fFLEXI%5fWAGE%5fSELF[illegible]History=true&menuGroup=Lea that is available if people would like an overview of these. Or click on the relevant links on this page, for further information.

What's new Flexi-wage Self-employment

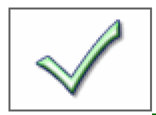
In early 2026, we will be implementing improvements to strengthen the gateway for Flexi-Wage Self Employment applications. These improvements aim to encourage a more consistent approach across the country and ensure we are supporting viable applications that are most likely to succeed through to the next stage.

Throughout 2025, we worked alongside kaimahi and the business to identify key areas that needed to be addressed to support these improvements.

These improvements will include:

- Increased visibility of criteria, expectations, and requirements for potential applicants
- Streamlined and strengthened client pre-application process
- Strengthened and updated resources, tools, and guidance for staff

More information and detailed timelines will be shared through key communication channels soon. Watch this space.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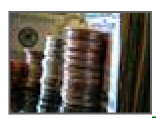
Flexi-wage Self-Employment - Eligibility [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-eligibility.html]

Outlines the eligibility criteria for Flexi-wage Self Employment


[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-payments.html]

Flexi-wage Self-employment Payments [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-payments.html]

Outlines the payments and assistance available under Flexi-wage Self-employment

 [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-process.html]

Flexi-wage Self-Employment and Self-Employment Start-up - Process [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-process.html]

The process(es) for Flexi-wage Self-employment and Self-employment Start-up.

 [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/self-employment-start-up/self-employment-start-up.html]

Self-employment Start-up (SESU) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/self-employment-start-up/self-employment-start-up.html]

Everything you need to know about Self-employment Start-up

 [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-landing-page.html]

Business Training and Advance Grant (BTAG) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-landing-page.html]

Everything you need to know about the Business Training and Advance Grant (BTAG)

Content owner: Employment Portfolio **Last updated:** 19 December 2025

Review criteria for Flexi-wage Self Employment

Formal review rights don't apply for Flexi-wage Self Employment. This is because this payment isn't provided for under any legislation. Declined BTAG payments and the self-employed start-up payments can be considered by the Benefit Review Committee if the applicant does not agree with the original decision.

A review of Flexi-wage Self Employment should be based on whether an 'informed' decision was made and should have regard to the following:

- was all relevant information obtained
- were the appropriate options and implications considered
- was the decision made at the appropriate level of delegation

Having regard to the delegation level of the original decision, the review should be carried out by the:

- Service Centre Manager
- Regional Director **or**
- Regional Commissioner

Flexi-wage Self-Employment Eligibility

Flexi wage Self-employment is a subsidy that helps eligible clients with the costs related to moving into self-employment. This page outlines the client, employment, and business eligibility requirements.

On this Page:

Client eligibility criteria

To qualify for Flexi-wage Self-Employment (FWSE), a client must meet the following client eligibility criteria:

be aged 18 years or older and not qualified to get New Zealand Superannuation in their own right
meet the Flexi-wage residency criteria [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/residence-01.html]
not be insolvent [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-clients-who-may-not-be-eligible.html]
be unemployed
be at risk of long-term benefit receipt, and
be disadvantaged in the labour market.

At risk of long-term benefit receipt

At risk of long-term benefit receipt [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/deciding-if-a-client-is-at-risk-of-long-term-benefit-receipt.html] means there is a risk a client will get or continue getting a main benefit for an indefinite period.

To decide whether a person is at risk of getting a benefit long-term, you need to consider several factors. These include:

demographic information e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, and location
level of skills, employment experience and education
specific barriers to employment e.g., medical conditions, caring responsibilities
benefit status and history e.g. ,current period they have been getting a main benefit, time spent on and off benefit, age when they first started getting a benefit
previous times they got, or participated in, MSD employment programmes and services

Generally, a person at risk of long-term benefit receipt is either:

getting or qualifies for a main benefit or
has a partner who is getting or qualifies for a main benefit

Clients not on a main benefit who meet the following criteria may also be at risk of long-term benefit receipt:

they and their partner are unemployed, or
they and their partner are employed, but
they are underemployed (i.e., working part-time but can and wants to work full-time) or have low job security (e.g. casual, fixed term, at risk of redundancy), and
they would qualify for a main benefit if they weren’t employed, and

one or both partners have a recent or long history of receiving a main benefit.

Note there is no income test, even for people not getting a main benefit.

On benefit and not at risk

Not everyone receiving a main benefit will be at risk of long-term benefit receipt. For example a person who is work ready, can get and retain employment without help, and only requires income support for a short period while they find employment, or a person new to benefit with no history of benefit receipt and no barriers to employment.

Disadvantaged in the labour market

A client who is disadvantaged in the labour market [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/deciding-if-a-client-is-disadvantaged-in-the-labour-market.html] is someone who has, or is expected to have, difficulty getting into or staying in unsubsidised employment.

This includes a person who:

has significant barriers to employment [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/significant-barriers-to-employment.html] or

is underemployed, or is in a job with low job security [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/low-job-security-or-underemployed.html] , or

has lost their job, and whose occupation, industry or region is (or is expected to be) affected by an economic downturn [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/displacement-due-to-economic-downturn.html] .

Affected by an economic downturn

This could include people in:

industries that have been negatively affected by an economic downturn, particularly industries with a high concentration of people with low-medium education levels

regions that depend on either a lot of industries affected by an economic downturn, or a small number of large employers who have been affected

occupations that are no longer in high demand by employers, or the person has skills which are severely mismatched to the jobs available.

Employment eligibility criteria

To qualify for Flexi-wage Self-Employment the employment must be:

permanent (i.e., on-going), and

30 hours or more per week for people with full-time work obligations, or

15 hours or more per week for people with part-time work obligations or a deferral from work obligations (if they can work 15 hours or more). They must be able to fully support themselves from their business without a main benefit.

Note the hours requirement also applies to clients not getting a main benefit. The work obligations are based on what their obligations would be if they were getting a main benefit.

Business eligibility criteria

To qualify for Flexi-wage Self-Employment the business must:

be based and operating in New Zealand

be viable

not be an inappropriate business [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-inappropriate-businesses.html] or an unsuitable industry [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-industries-that-may-not-be-suitable.html]

not be a business previously operated by the client [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-clients-who-may-not-be-eligible.html] , and

not be a business currently operated by the client [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-clients-who-may-not-be-eligible.html] (except in specific circumstances).

Viable

This means the business has high chance of long-term survival and the ability to sustain profits over a long period of time. To decide whether a business is viable you might consider:

how strong the business plan [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-business-plan.html] is

demand for the product or service the client wants to provide

level of competition within the market

information from the independent vetting assessment [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-vetting.html]

any other relevant information about the client that indicates whether they are likely to be successful in running the business.

If a client is going into a business with other people, refer to the People going into business together [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-people-going-into-business-together.html] page for more information.

Content owner: Employment Portfolio **Last updated:** 12 March 2024

Flexi-Wage Self-Employment and Self-Employment Start-up – Process

This page explains the process for Flexi-Wage Self-Employment and Self-Employment Start-up. It also provides links to further information on specific parts of the process.

Roles and responsibilities in Flexi-wage Self-employment decisions

When a case manager and client make decisions about Flexi-wage Self-employment (FWSE), there are three key roles in the decision-making process for FWSE. They are:

the FWSE specialist Work Broker in your region (if there is one)
Vetting Agents and,
Business Advisors.

Check out the Roles and responsibilities in FWSE and Start-up [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-specialist-process.html] link to find out about the roles and responsibilities in the process, so you know when to involve them.

Business process links

- FWSE Business Process - Written (Word 38.36KB) [http://doogle/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/fwse-business-process-final.docx]
- FWSE Business Process Flow (PDF 120.61KB) [http://doogle/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/fwse-business-process-final.pdf]

Privacy form and Consent

Before we assess a client's eligibility to FWSE, or complete any part of the process, we need the client to either sign a privacy form or provide their verbal consent for us to do this.

We need the client's consent because we use their personal information to assess their entitlement to FWSE, process the application, and sometimes to refer them to a contracted service provider as part of the application process.

Refer to the Privacy and Consent Process [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/products-services/work-and-income/industry-partnerships/mana-mahi/privacy-form-and-consent-process.html] page for this process and to answer any questions or concerns the client might have.

If the client refuses to provide their consent, the application must not continue

If the client agrees to provide their consent, follow the consent process, then continue to the next section, *"Process for FWSE and Self-employment Start-up"*.

Process for FWSE and Start-up

Stage	Steps	Tools & Forms
Job seeker (client) expresses interest in Flexi-Wage Self-Employment (FWSE)	**1.** If a Job Seeker (client) says they are interested in applying for Flexi-wage Self-employment (FWSE) the Case Manager will need to check that they meet the	Eligibility criteria [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-

Stage	Steps	Tools & Forms
and/or Self-Employment Start-up (SESU)	client eligibility criteria. If you need help with this, click on the link for the "*Eligibility criteria*" in the **Tools and Forms** column. If you are unsure, please refer to the FWSE specialist Work Broker within your region. **2.** If the client does not meet the client eligibility criteria the Case Manager will complete and send the "*FWSE TEMPLATE - First Contact & Not Eligible (Decline letter 2)*" in the **Tools & Forms** column. • Advise the client there is other assistance or funding available, that they may want to consider. Refer to the "*Other assistance / funding for job seekers*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column. • Continue to step **3**. If the client meets the client eligibility criteria, the Case Manager will complete and send the "*FWSE TEMPLATE - First Contact & Eligible (Letter 1)*" and the "*FWSE TEMPLATE - Are you thinking of becoming self-employed*" assessment form to the client via email. Both letters/forms can be found in the **Tools & Forms** column. Continue to the next step. **3.** The Case Manager must record the conversation, and any relevant information, into a client event note, on the client's CMS record. If the client doesn't have a CMS record, you'll need to create one. Refer to the "*CMS - Searching and registering a new person*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column. The client event notes must include the following: a. Confirmation that the client has completed the Privacy/Consent process. **Note:** If the client signed the privacy form, scan this onto the client's CMS file and link it to this note. Refer to the "*Uploading electronic documents to CMS*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column if you want help with this. b. Whether the client does or does not meet the client eligibility criteria (include reasons, if appropriate) c. A copy of the email template sent to the client, including the sender details. **4.** If the client is not eligible for FWSE, no further action is taken. **End of process.** If the client is eligible, continue to the next step. **5.** Refer the client to the FWSE specialist Work Broker if they are not already in contact.	wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-eligibility.html] Other assistance / funding for job seekers [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/other-sources-of-assistance-funding-for-self-employment.html] FWSE TEMPLATE - First Contact & Not Eligible (Decline letter 2) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/doc-2-fwse-first-contact-client-not-eligible.docx] FWSE TEMPLATE - First Contact & Eligible (Letter 1) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/doc-1-fwse-first-contact-eligible.docx] FWSE TEMPLATE - Are you thinking of becoming self-employed [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/doc-3-are-you-thinking-of-becoming-self-employed.docx] CMS - Searching and registering a new person [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/strategy-and-change/employment/cms-searching-and-registering-a-new-person.pdf] Uploading electronic documents to CMS [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/strategy-and-change/uploading-documents-to-cms.html]

Stage	Steps	Tools & Forms
The FWSE specialist Work Broker discusses the FWSE application process and expectations with the client	**6.** If the client has a business idea the FWSE Specialist Work Broker will check whether it meets the business and employment eligibility criteria. Refer to the "*Eligibility criteria*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column if you need further information. **Note:** the FWSE specialist Work Broker will complete all further actions in this process unless advised otherwise **7.** Explain the next steps of the process and expectations to the client, including: a. the business plan requirements, b. the vetting process, and c. that there may be on-going support from business experts or mentors that can help guide them through these processes, and d. that we have a list of preferred suppliers if the client needs this, or any additional support. **8.** Ask the client if they need help to create a business plan. If the client doesn't need help creating a business plan, continue to step **9**. If the client does need help completing a business plan: a. refer the client to the "*List of preferred suppliers*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column, and b. complete the Business Training and Advice Grant (BTAG) process. Refer to the "*Business Training and Advice Grant*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column. **Note:** Once the business plan has been completed, continue to the next step.	Eligibility criteria [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-eligibility.html] List of preferred suppliers (PDF 390.35KB) [http://doogle/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/btag-provider-list.pdf] Business Training and Advice Grant [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-landing-page.html]
Client submits their business plan for vetting	**9.** Check that the client's business plan and all required information is provided. **Note:** This is not to evaluate the business plan or viability of the business, it is to ensure that all necessary information has been provided, before it is forwarded to the independent vetting agent. This includes, but is not limited to the following: a. Full business details b. What the business does and how c. Strategies and goals d. Market and competitor analysis e. Current and planned assets list. f. Financial planning, including cash flows, profit and loss forecast and any debt owing to MSD. **10.** Complete and send the "*FWSE TEMPLATE - Business Plan Acknowledgement (Letter 4)*" letter to the client via email. The link for this is in	FWSE TEMPLATE - Business Plan Acknowledgement (Letter 4) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/doc-4-fwse-business-plan-acknowledgment.docx]

Stage	Steps	Tools & Forms
	the **Tools & Forms** column. • If the business plan is complete, edit the letter to acknowledge this before sending it to the client. • If the business plan is missing information, edit the letter to advise what information is missing and include a return date you need the information by, before sending it to the client. When the client has provided all the information required for the business plan, continue to the next step.	
Vetting agent and vetting report with recommendation	**11.** Provide the vetting agent with the client's business plan and complete the BTAG process. Refer to the "*BTAG process*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column for information about this process. **12.** Once the vetting agent has reviewed the business plan they will provide a report to the FWSE specialist Work Broker and a recommendation letter. Refer to the "*BTAG Vetting*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column for further information about this process. **13.** Re-check the client's eligibility in case their circumstances have changed since the initial application. If the client is no longer eligible for FWSE: • complete and send the "*FWSE TEMPLATE - Application declined - Client Based (Letter 5)*"letter to the client via email. The letter can be found in the **Tools & Forms** column • scan a copy of the letter and email into the client's CMS file • End of process. **Note:** If the client disagrees with this decision and wishes to review/challenge it, refer to step **28** for the review process. If the client is eligible, continue to the next step. **14.** Check whether the vetting agent's recommendation is that the business is viable. If the vetting agent recommends that the business is not currently viable, they may provide advice to the client or help them adjust their business plan **15.** If the vetting agent doesn't recommend the business plan: • complete and send the "*FWSE TEMPLATE - Application declined - Business Based (Letter 6)*" letter to the client via email. The letter can be found in the **Tools & Forms** column • scan a copy of the letter and the email into the client's CMS file	BTAG Process [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-process-overview.html] BTAG - Vetting [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-/business-training-and-advice-grant-btag-vetting.html] FWSE TEMPLATE - Application declined - Client Based (Letter 5) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/doc-5-fwse-application-decline-client-based.docx] FWSE TEMPLATE - Application declined - Business Based (Letter 6) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/doc-6-fwse-application-decline-business-based.docx] Uploading electronic documents to CMS [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/strategy-and-change/uploading-documents-to-cms.html]

Stage	Steps	Tools & Forms
	• End of process. **Note:** If the client disagrees with this decision and wishes to review/challenge it, refer to step **28** for the review process. If the vetting agent has recommended the business plan, the FWSE specialist Work Broker will: • inform the Manager Regional Employment of the outcome, and • scan and save the business plan and vetting report into the client's CMS record. **Note:** these documents will need to be linked to the relevant CMS client event note once they have been created (step **23**).	
Deciding how much to grant	**16.** The FWSE subsidy is paid at a set rate of $600 a week for 28-weeks ($16,800 in total). For couples, the amount will be $360 each per week, for 28 weeks ($10,800 each, in total). **Note:** FWSE can be pro-rated for those with part-time work obligations, but the client must be able to show they can support themselves from their earnings in time and not need a benefit. Refer to the "*FWSE Payments*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column if you need more information about the subsidy or pro-rated rate. **17.** Costs associated with starting a business are provided for under Self-Employment Start-Up, up to $10,000. Use the business plan and vetting agent's report to work out the exact amount of Self-Employment Start-up required. From the business plan and vetting agent's report, work out when the mid-project financial report would be due.	FWSE Payments [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-payments.html]
Granting Flexi-Wage Self-employment and / or Self-Employment Start-Up	**18.** To grant Flexi-Wage Self-Employment and/or Self-Employment Start-up, complete the Flexi-Wage Self-Employment Agreement in CMS and send to your Manager Regional Employment. The client will be required to provide you with: • Verified bank account details, IRD and GST numbers • a quote for start-up costs (capital). **Note:** Refer to the "*Bank Account*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column for more information about business bank accounts. **19.** Add the opportunity number to CMS, create an employer profile and client self-placement. Refer to the "*CMS Provider Management User Guide*" link, in the **Tools & Forms** column, for more information, if required.	Bank account [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-subsidy-claims.html#Bankaccount4] CMS Provider Management User Guide [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/strategy-and-change/employment/cms-provider-management-user-guide-august-release.docx] Approval process and decision guidelines for FWSE and SE Start-up [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-

Stage	Steps	Tools & Forms
	20. Submit the recommendation of approval and Flexi-wage self-employment agreement / contract in CMS to the Manager Regional Employment. Refer to the "*Approval process and decision guidelines for FWSE and SE Start-up*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column if you want to information about what will be considered for the approval process. **21.** Contract is approved and sent via CMS to the National Claims Processing Unit (NCPU) to be processed. Send "*FWSE TEMPLATE - Application Approved (Letter 7)*" to the client via email. Refer to the letter in the **Tools & Forms** column. **22.** Refer the client to a case manager with expertise in business income to discuss the benefit impacts with the client and offer any potential non-benefit assistance. If required, they can also refer to the "*FWSE and Self-employment start up – How payments affects benefits*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column, for further information. • Cancel benefit and organise any additional assistance the client has requested • Offer provider support - complete Business Training and Advice Grant process, if required, for people requesting or needing ongoing support.	employment-start-up-approval-process-and-decision-guidelines.html] FWSE TEMPLATE - Application Approved (Letter 7) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage/doc-7-fwse-application-approved.docx] FWSE and Self-Employment Start-up – How payments affects benefits [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-how-payments-affects-benefits.html]
Entering client event notes in CMS	**23.** Enter document details of the Flexi-Wage Self-Employment subsidy and Self-Employment Start-up payment in client event notes in CMS. Include: • the length of time the FWSE has been approved for • when the project financial report is due • what the weekly subsidy amount is ($600 for full time, or a pro-rated amount for part time) • how much the Flexi-Wage Self-Employment is and what it will be used for and • any other details relating to the FWSE that you believe are relevant. Record all decisions in CMS client event notes. Note anything which is considered unusual so that an independent person can read the notes later and see how and why you made that decision.	
Subsidy claims	**24.** Once the FWSE agreement has been approved and all documents received, NCPU will process and release the first lot of payments to the client within 48 hours. NCPU will process all remaining subsidy claims when received from the client during the subsidy period. Refer to the "*Subsidy claims for FWSE and Start-up*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column for further information	Subsidy claims for FWSE and Start-up [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-and-self-employment-start-up-subsidy-claims.html]

Stage	Steps	Tools & Forms
Change of bank account	**25.** For any changes to the bank account during the subsidy period, the client must provide verification of this. Refer to the "*Bank account*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column for more information on acceptable bank account evidence and ways we can accept this. **26.** Once verification of the new bank account number has been received, email the NCPU team to update this, at: Flexi_Wage_Self_Employment@workandincome.govt.nz [mailto:Flexi_Wage_Self_Employment@workandincome.govt.nz]	Bank account [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/processing-standards/bank-accounts-01.html]
Monitoring	**27.** The FWSE specialist Work Broker will complete check-ups at the 1, 3- and 6-month milestones of the business starting. a. **1 month:** The client is required to provide receipts for what the Self-employment Start-up funding was spent on. This is to check that they used the money for the purpose it was paid. b. **3 months:** The FWSE specialist Work Broker contacts the client to check in on how business is going. The supplier support continues here (if this was already included in initial BTAG support package). Otherwise if there sufficient BTAG funding, re-offer this support to the client. c. **6 months:** FWSE specialist contacts client for check in. Supplier support can continue here or is re-offered to client	
Review process for clients	**28.** Decisions regarding the Flexi-Wage Self-Employment wage subsidy are **not** reviewable to the Benefit Review Committee or Social Security Appeal Authority. Find out more about the review process in the "*Review process for clients*" link in the **Tools & Forms** column.	Review process for clients [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/employment-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/flexi-wage-self-employment/flexi-wage-self-employment-review-process-for-clients.html]

Content owner: Employment Portfolio **Last updated:** 20 February 2026

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

WORK AND INCOME
TE HIRANGA TANGATA

Do you want to start your own business?

We may be able to support you and help with costs while you get started.

Flexi-wage Self-employment is one of the ways we support New Zealanders into work.

Who can get Flexi-wage Self-employment?

You may be able to get Flexi-wage Self-employment if you're all of the following:

- out of work
- aged between 18 and 64 inclusive (or 65+ and don't qualify for NZ Super)
- disadvantaged in the local labour market
- at risk of long-term benefit dependency
- able to meet the residency criteria
- not be insolvent.

Flexi-wage Self-employment includes:

- $600 a week over 28 weeks, totalling $16,800 (GST inc) if you're running your business full-time
- a Business Training and Advice Grant of up to $5,000 (to develop a business plan or participate in training for business skills, advice and producing project reports).

Contact us if you're interested

We'll talk with you about your business idea, your needs and what type of help we may be able to offer.

We'll need to see your business plan and, if you don't already have one, help you find out how to create one. We can also tell you how a Business Training and Advice Grant might be able to help.

We then send your business plan to be independently assessed to make sure the business is potentially viable.

We'll let you know the outcome of the assessment and, if it's approved, we'll send you a contract to get Flexi-wage underway.

Find out more by calling our Employer Services team, **0800 778 008**, or go to **www.workandincome.govt.nz/flexiwage**

You may also be able to get up to $10,000, to help with business start-up costs, through our Self-employment start up payment: **www.workandincome.govt.nz/startup**

EMPL1202W– MAY 2021