27 September 2016

Attention: Mr Brendan Boyle - The Chief Executive

Re: Requests under sections 12 and 16 of the Official Information Act 1982 - for specified information to be made available

Dear Mr Brendan Boyle, dear staff at the Ministry for Social Development

Please accept my request for the disclosure of specified information under sections 12 and 16 of the Official Information Act 1982. I kindly ask you to make available the following information, in as much detail as can reasonably be expected:

1. Detailed information about the names, the head office- and on-site service provider addresses, and the particular services offered, for all the providers the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has so far entered contracts with, to provide so-called “Work to Wellness” employment support and referral services. These new services appear to be offered from this month on to persons receiving a benefit and having mental health conditions, as a press release by ‘beehive.govt.nz’ from 31 August 2016 under the heading ‘Helping those with health conditions into work’ shows.

2. Details about the fees payable by MSD, about the agreed fee structure, the terms for payment of fees, the outcome expectations from the various providers, that were agreed to between MSD and the individual providers as mentioned under question 1. This is also in consideration of already previously established “particular service intensity categorisation” used for the ‘Mental Health Employment Services’, and details about the continued use of any such used categorisations will be appreciated.

3. Relevant details about the provided “wrap-around services” that were already mentioned by the Minister for Social Development, which are intended to support the clients that Work and Income (WINZ) refers to the various providers of ‘Work to Wellness’ services. I am with this question asking about “wrap-around services” that will be provided by health-, disability- and/or addiction treatment and support service providers that may be contracted by WINZ, or at least are cooperated with through WINZ. What kinds of such extra clinical support services have been agreed on, who
will pay for them, and what are the roles and expected minimum clinical qualifications of staff at those presumably external “wrap around service” providers that may offer health-, disability and/or addiction treatment and support services - in whatever types and forms? Detailed information in relation to the various types of such “wrap-around service” providers, their function and their services will be much appreciated.

4. Information on how many beneficiaries having “moderate” - or more significant - diagnosed mental health conditions, have to this date been referred to ‘Work to Wellness’ services? Also how many were approached to consider being referred, how many agreed to be referred, how many refused to be referred, how many have so far been successfully placed into employment? How many have had to terminate their efforts working with providers of “Work to Wellness” services, and of them, for what reason did they do so? Detailed records on this would be appreciated.

5. Information on whether any referred Work and Income clients with mental health conditions suffered any noted medical problems (psychological, psychiatric or physical) upon having been referred to ‘Work to Wellness’ providers as mentioned above, and what types of problems were there, since such services started? Also in relation to this, if such cases occurred, what measures were taken by the provider and/or by WINZ, to offer support for the clients affected, and what records have been kept on this? Please provide relevant details, provided such cases exist.

6. Information on whether there are any implied or express expectations, e.g. in the form of obligations, that the Ministry places on applicants and recipients of benefits with diagnosed mental health conditions to participate in ‘Work to Wellness’ services.

7. Information in broken down detail, on how many beneficiaries having “moderate” - or more significant - mental health conditions, were during the earlier trials in the form of ‘Mental Health Employment Services’ being referred to such services? Also how many had been approached to consider being referred, how many agreed to be referred, how many refused to be referred, and how many were successfully placed into employment for more than 3 months, more than 6 months and more than 12 months? How many have had to terminate their efforts working with providers of “Mental Health Employment Services”, and of them, for what reason did they do so? Detailed records on this would be appreciated.

8. Information on whether the formerly announced and introduced ‘Mental Health Employment Services’ have by now been evaluated and reviewed, whether they have been discontinued, or whether they are being continued in either unchanged - or in any changed form.

9. Information in the form of copies of evaluation reports on ‘Mental Health Employment Services’ that were run as trials since late 2013 (or early 2014), same as on ‘Sole Parent Employment Services’. I note that there appear to be no such reports publicly available. If they are, please provide links or directions to where they are found, perhaps on the MSD website or elsewhere. In the press release titled ‘Helping those with health conditions into work’, from 31 August 2016, only references were made to a drop by more than 12 per cent of sole parents without work obligations in the year to March 2016. This may though rather be due to tightened criteria for granting such benefits rather than trials that were run to assist sole parents into employment.

10. Information on the particular reasons why ‘Work to Wellness’ trials are now being conducted, given the fact that very similar services had already been conducted in the form of ‘Mental Health Employment Services’, at least until recently. Of assistance would be explanations for any possible changes in the terms and conditions that may
be part of the agreements between MSD and providers. They may not be available in
detail due to commercial sensitivity or interests, but a clear enough explanation of
such possible differences between former and new contracts would be appreciated.

11. Information in the form of a complete current list (with names, health qualifications,
practice names and addresses, preferably also by regions) of ‘Designated Doctors’
that MSD and WINZ have on their files, and being available to be commissioned to
conduct medical and/or work capability examinations on WINZ clients with health
conditions and disabilities, and/or persons who they may care for (see for instance
also provisions under sections 88E, 40C and 40E of the Social Security Act 1964).

12. Information in the form of the official current ‘Guide for Designated Doctors’, or any
newer replacement guide, that MSD provides to medical and health practitioners in
order to inform them of their requirements and expectations in relation to conducting
examinations and preparing reports for MSD - on clients with health conditions and /
or disability. I note that some time ago, in an earlier Official Information Act response
a reference was made to the WINZ or MSD website, where such information could
supposedly be found, but it was never found, even after extensive searching.

The above specified information is sought for reasons of providing desired transparency and
accountability to the public, and is asked to be made available under the Official Information
Act 1982 within the specified time frame of 20 working days.

I kindly and respectfully ask that the information will be made available by way of a detailed
written response, and by way of good quality, easily readable photo copies of original
documents containing the relevant information. Otherwise it can in part also be made
available by way of equally good quality computer generated printouts. If not available in
hard copy form, a standard CD containing the corresponding, relevant information or
documents in PDF, or other common, readable data format, can be accepted.

Thank you for your acknowledgment and appreciated co-operation.

Yours sincerely

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