

## Follow-up questions and responses from Woe to Go Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Below is a summary of key questions and responses at “Woe to Go” for attendees. We are planning a follow up Woe to Go later in the year. Do email us with particular Work and Income questions or issues you would like discussed.

Email : [admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz](mailto:admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz)

### A. Main benefits

#### 1. What main benefits are available for disabled people?

Three main benefits based on work capacity:

- **Jobseeker Support** is for people who can work 30 hours or more per week
- **Jobseeker Support with a Health Condition or Disability** is for people who can work between 15 and 30 hours per week, or not at all for a short period of time due to a health condition or disability
- **Supported Living Payment** is for people who can work less than 15 hours per week or are unable to work

#### 2. Is income support based on disability diagnosis?

- No. Decisions around income support are always based on work capacity, not the diagnosis itself (although it is the impact of the condition that will impact work capacity). Some products rely more heavily on diagnosis and its impact, such as Disability Allowance or Child Disability Allowance where this is the criteria for support.

### B. Child Disability Allowance

#### 3. What is the Child Disability Allowance (CDA)?

The Child Disability Allowance is a non-income tested payment for caregivers.

- It recognises the extra care and attention needed to support a disabled child
- It is not designed to cover the costs of the disability

#### 4. What are the criteria for Child Disability Allowance (CDA)?

Your child must:

- Be under 18
- Have a disability or health condition
- Need significantly more care and attention than a non-disabled child of the same age

Decisions are based on:

- Level of care required
- What your child can and cannot do independently (function)
- Supervision and safety needs

Eligibility is based on how the disability affects everyday life, not just the diagnosis, and must be confirmed by a health practitioner. We may ask for additional information from the family or medical practitioner involved in your child's care to confirm the impacts of the disability.

#### **5. Why is CDA sometimes reviewed?**

- A child's needs can change over time
- Some children may need less additional care and attention as they get older and are more capable of managing their own needs

#### **6. Why don't more families know about CDA?**

- There is low awareness of the Child Disability Allowance
- Some GPs are not aware it is not income tested
- Many eligible families are not told about it but MSD are trying to spread the word as far as they can. MSD can do presentations for any group, or agency and often present to health professionals as well.
- Ask Mike for Sonja's details if you have a group who would like a presentation.

## **Disability Allowance**

#### **7. Can my child get financial support for disability-related costs?**

Disability Allowance covers the cost **of ongoing, health and disability related costs**. Both children and adults can apply for Disability Allowance where these costs are not met by another agency.

This can include:

- GP visits
- Travel to appointments
- Unfunded medications or supplements, creams, special body wash products i.e. due to severe eczema
- Clothing where it is additional due to the disability (i.e. clothing is regularly damaged)
- Incontinence products
- Therapies such as art or music therapy, speech therapy, equine therapy,
- Gym / pool fees where the exercise need is related to the disability (including mental health issues such as anxiety or depression)

#### **Special Foods**

- Special foods for special diets such as low or no lactose, low or no gluten, renal diets or support for additional food costs due to ARFID (Avoidant-Restrictive Food Intake Disorder)

(FODMAP is not covered as it is not meant to be an ongoing a diet – it is means to be an period of dieting to confirm allergies – once these are confirmed, the diet is then identified)

- Additional costs of washing or heating due to a disability

### **8. Do you have to be on a benefit to get Disability Allowance?**

No. You can still qualify if your income is under the threshold, even if you are not receiving a main benefit.

### **9. How much is Disability Allowance?**

The maximum rate of DA is \$82.25/week from 1 April 2026. How much you get will depend on your income and your costs.

## **Employment while on a benefit**

### **10. Can my child earn money while on a benefit?**

- Yes, a person can earn up to \$160 per week before their benefit is reduced

### **11. What if my young person can't work independently?**

Work and Income can provide support such as:

- One-to-one employment support
- Help to find suitable work
- Connections to supported employment providers

## **Complaints process**

### **12. Who can I tell if my experience wasn't a good one with MSD?**

- Talk to your case manager first or ask to speak to the manager of the site
- Make a complaint Make a complaint about how you were treated or how your application was handled
- You can contact the Helpline and they can write up your complaint for you.

### **13. What can I do if I disagree with an application decision?**

- Talk to your case manager first
- Ask for a Review of Decision within three months

### **14. What can I do if I disagree with a Medical Decision?**

- Talk to your case manager first
- Ask for a Review of Decision within three months
- If this doesn't change the decision, you can ask to go to the Medical Appeals Board