

Whare Kaupapa Atawhai /
Conservation House Head Office

18 Manners Street
Wellington 6011

doc.govt.nz

Ref: OIAD-6094

10 March 2026

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 13 February 2026, in which you asked for:

Under the Official Information Act 1982, I request the following information relating to your agency's use of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) services, annualised for the calendar years 2023, 2024, and 2025 (to 31 December 2025):

For each EAP service provider engaged during this period, please provide:

- 1. The name of the service provider.*
- 2. The total amount spent with that provider in each year.*
- 3. The number of referrals, sessions, or instances of service usage attributed to that provider in each year (or the closest equivalent usage measure held).*
- 4. A brief description of the types of services provided under each contract (e.g. counselling, wellbeing support, critical incident support).*
- 5. A list of any other employee benefits or programmes related to mental and/or physical wellbeing offered during this period (excluding EAP), and for each year:*
 - a. the name or type of benefit/programme, and*
 - b. any estimated annual expenditure allocated to those benefits, where such estimates are held.*

If usage or expenditure data is held only in aggregated or indicative form, I am happy to receive it at that level.

Context

Like other government agencies, DOC provides a national Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). DOC uses a single national Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider, Habit Health, to support the health, safety, and wellbeing of its employees. Habit Health delivers DOC's core EAP services, which include short-term, confidential counselling for personal or work-related issues, Rongoā Māori services, and manager support services.

DOC also accesses specialist services through Habit Health when circumstances require additional support to mitigate health and safety risks. These services may include critical incident and trauma support, professional supervision, group supervision, psychological fitness-for-work assessments, and drug and alcohol counselling. Habit Health is the sole provider of both standard and specialist EAP services during the period covered by this request.

In addition to EAP services, DOC offers several wellbeing-related benefits to support employees' mental and physical wellbeing. These include eyecare support for employees who have been with DOC for at least one-year, discounted health insurance through Southern Cross Health Society. Health insurance discounts do not incur direct expenditure to the Department.

More information about our staff benefits can be found on our website:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/careers/working-at-doc/staff-benefits/>

Your Request

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *The name of the service provider.*

DOC used only Habit Health as its EAP provider for all standard and specialist services during the calendar years 2023, 2024, and 2025

2. *The total amount spent with that provider in each year.*

Annual expenditure with Habit Health:

CALENDAR YEAR	EXPENDITURE
2023	\$133,451
2024	\$240,521
2025	\$269,023

3. *The number of referrals, sessions, or instances of service usage attributed to that provider in each year (or the closest equivalent usage measure held).*

DOC records EAP utilisation based on the number of sessions delivered by Habit Health, noting that a single employee may attend multiple sessions, or have multiple session for various matters. Therefore, the session count represents total service usage rather than the number of unique individuals.

CALENDAR YEAR	NUMBER OF SESSIONS
2023	866
2024	1203
2025	1479

4. ***A brief description of the types of services provided under each contract (e.g. counselling, wellbeing support, critical incident support).***

Habit Health is the only provider used for both standard and specialist services.

Standard EAP Services

- Short-term, confidential counselling (personal or work-related challenges)
- Rongoā Māori services
- Manager support and advice

Specialist services (engaged as required)

- Critical incident and trauma support
- Professional supervision
- Group supervision
- Psychological fitness for work assessments
- Drug and alcohol counselling

5. ***A list of any other employee benefits or programmes related to mental and/or physical wellbeing offered during this period (excluding EAP), and for each year:***

- the name or type of benefit/programme: and***
- any estimated annual expenditure allocated to those benefits, where such estimates are held.***

DOC offers additional mental and physical wellbeing-related benefits.

Eyecare Support

Eyecare Support is available to employees with at least one year of service. DOC reimburses eye tests where a work-related need is identified. If corrective lenses or laser surgery are required, DOC subsidises costs covering the test and corrective treatment up to \$450, claimable once in any two-year period.

Annual expenditure for eyecare support:

CALENDAR YEAR	ANNUAL EXPENDITURE
2023	\$214,585
2024	\$254,093
2025	\$299,787

Health Insurance:

All DOC employees can access discounted health insurance through Southern Cross Health Society. The discount is provided directly by the insurer, and DOC does not make any payments or contributions toward these premiums. As a result, no Departmental expenditure is incurred, and any theoretical opportunity cost is not captured or reported as an expense.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to An Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the OIA.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Department's website.

If you would like to discuss this response with us, please contact media@doc.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Karyn Thompson

Chief People Officer

Department of Conservation

Te Papa Atawhai