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# Social Security Appeal Authority

## Position Description, 2026

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### The Authority's role

The Social Security Appeal Authority (the Authority) is a statutory tribunal established under Schedule 8 of the Social Security Act 2018 (the Act).

The Authority hears appeals against decisions on income support entitlements made by the Ministry of Social Development which have already been reviewed by a local Benefits Review Committee. Hearings are conducted by the Authority's Chair or Deputy Chair with at least one other Authority member.

The Authority operates independently of the Ministry of Social Development. The Ministry of Justice's Tribunal Unit provides administrative support to the Authority. More information about the Authority is available at [www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/social-security-appeal-authority/](http://www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/social-security-appeal-authority/).

The Authority typically holds hearings in Auckland and Wellington. It holds hearings in Christchurch and regional centres from time to time.

Information about reviews of income support decisions, including the role of Benefits Review Committees, is available at [www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/feedback-and-complaints/review-of-decisions.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/feedback-and-complaints/review-of-decisions.html).

### The Authority's membership and appointment

The Authority consists of at least four members. One member is appointed as the Authority's Chair and another member as the Deputy Chair. The Authority currently has six members.

While it is not a requirement of the Act, it is established practice to appoint members with strong legal backgrounds as the Chair and Deputy Chair. This assists in being able to interpret, and make rulings on, complex legal matters.

The role of other members is to provide broader community perspectives to the Authority's decision-making processes, as well as additional expertise on issues likely to come before the Authority. Members may also have legal experience.

Authority members are appointed by the Governor-General, on the recommendation of the Minister for Social Development and Employment after consultation with the Minister of Justice. Members may be appointed for a term of up to 5 years.

### Workload and remuneration

The Authority's workload varies according to the volume and complexity of appeals. The Chair role generally involves around 18 days work per month over 11 months of the year. The Deputy Chair role generally involves up to 13 days work per month over 11 months of the year. Member roles may require up to 8 days work a month over 10 months of the year.

Authority members' fees are set under the Cabinet Fees Framework. The Chair is paid \$1,129 per day. The Deputy Chair is paid \$1,004 per day. Members are paid \$714 per day.

Authority members (including the Chair and Deputy Chair) are also entitled to receive payment of expenses when travelling for Authority work or in connection with their role as an Authority member.

## **Authority member expertise and experience**

The Authority's members should have:

- strong connections to the wider community
- sound judgement, an appreciation of tribunal procedures and of the concept of natural justice, and an ability to conduct hearings in a manner that enables proper participation by all involved
- an awareness of and respect for diversity in all its forms, including differences in belief, gender, race, religious customs, age, disability, sexual orientation, and social or economic status
- an ability to communicate clearly and effectively
- a high level of personal integrity.

The Chair and Deputy Chair should also have:

- a strong legal background, with good statutory interpretation skills, ideally with knowledge of New Zealand social security legislation and regulations
- strong analytical and decision-making skills, including the ability to assess and weigh information
- strong writing skills, ideally including experience preparing written decisions
- an understanding of administrative processes.

## **Conflict of interests**

The Authority has processes in place to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest a member has are acknowledged when they are appointed and appropriately managed throughout the member's term.

## **Information collected on Authority members**

Information on those appointed to the Authority is collected and securely held by the Public Service Commission in a specialist system, 'AppointNet'. For more details, please see the AppointNet privacy statement at [www.publicservice.govt.nz/system/crown-entities/crown-entity-resource-centre/appointnet-privacy-protocol](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/system/crown-entities/crown-entity-resource-centre/appointnet-privacy-protocol)