



Dear [REDACTED]

On 1 November 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of sickness/jobseeker support benefits approved/paid by MSD going as far back as possible*
 - *Can this then be broken down into people who were applying for medical reasons, and broken down further by illness type (specifically cancer) or something else like terminal illness, temporary illness, long-term illness, disability.*
 - *How many were approved, how many were declined?*
- *The total cost of jobseeker support benefit payments made out to people with cancer each year between 2013 and 2018.*
- *Records of any one-off grants made by MSD to people dealing with sickness between 2013 and 2018.*

The Ministry helps clients with health conditions or disabilities in a number of ways. Clients may be entitled to either a Jobseeker Support benefit or Supported Living Payment depending on the length of their diagnosed condition. To be eligible for a Supported Living payment, a doctor must declare in a medical certificate that a person is unable to work for a period of more than two years.

Jobseeker Support (health condition, injury or disability) is available to clients who are temporarily unable to work or unable to work full-time due to a health condition, injury or disability. Client's receiving this type of Jobseeker Support may not be obligated to seek employment, depending on their individual circumstances and medical advice.

Supplementary assistance that can include the Disability Allowance may be available to help people meet on-going and additional costs incurred because of a medical condition or disability. This will depend on a person's individual circumstances. More information about supplementary assistance can be accessed here: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/definitions/supplementary-beneficiary-assistance-payments.htm>

More information about assistance available to people with health conditions or disabilities can be found here <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/health-and-disability/index.html>

In 2017, a streamlined process was introduced where the number of medical certificates required for clients receiving Jobseeker Support (health condition, injury or disability) with a cancer diagnosis has been reduced. Clients with a cancer diagnosis will need to provide one medical certificate that can be extended to cover 13 weeks, and when supporting information is provided about their treatment, medical coverage can be extended for the duration of that treatment.

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The Ministry requires clients on Jobseeker Support (health condition, injury or disability) to have their medical eligibility reviewed regularly, especially in the early stages of illness or disability as their diagnosis may be unclear or likely to change.

Attached is an excel document which includes three tables:

- **Table one** includes the number of clients with cancer as their primary incapacity for each year from 2006 to 2018, broken down by benefit category. This table also includes the sum of weekly payments in each category and the mean weekly rate for these clients.
- **Table two** includes the total number of clients with any incapacity from 2006 to 2018, broken down by benefit category.
- **Table three** includes the total number of clients from 2006 to 2018 in each incapacity category.

As you are likely aware there have been significant changes to the Social Welfare System over the period which this data covers. Notably, in 2013 changes were made to benefit categories which are reflected in the tables. Further information about the changes over the last decade is available on the Ministry's website at:

- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/regulatory-impact-statements/future-focus.html
- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/annual-report/2012-2013/more-people-into-work-and-out-of-welfare-dependency.html

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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.

Yours sincerely



Cassandra Wise
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