



20 AUG 2020

Tēnā koe

On 9 August 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

*The number of devices and connection access that went out to individuals in the Deaf community since 25 March 2020.*

On 10 August 2020, you clarified via email that you were looking for information about the number of phones/tablets/computers, as well as funding for internet connections that would allow for video signing online. You also specified that you would like the numbers of those that received "low support (small value phone credits) and those who got full access to unlimited bytes".

The Ministry provided \$64,000 in grants to Deaf specific organisations during the COVID-19 lockdown. As part of reporting requirements, these organisations informed the Ministry in July 2020 that the following support was provided directly to the Deaf community:

- Phone top ups to 81 community members to ensure that they had data and credit to keep in touch with family and friends.
- Access to laptops, where the need was identified.
- Access to New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), through a home window in an urgent case.
- Access to all information in NZSL regarding COVID daily updates, where the need was identified.
- Support with setting up online banking, where the need was identified.
- Support in how to do online shopping, and how to pay bills.

Your request for the number of devices provided, and the number of those who received assistance for internet access, is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as this information is not held by the Ministry, and there are no grounds to believe that it is held by another organisation, Minister, or Government agency.

While the Ministry provided funding to organisations to support the Deaf community during the COVID-19 lockdown, the Ministry does not have a detailed breakdown of how these funds were spent, or the number of people that were supported, nor was it required that the organisations who received funding provide the Ministry with this detailed information.

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. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter 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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the devices and support for internet connection provided to the Deaf Community since 25 March 2020, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Kelvin Moffatt

**General Manager, Service and Contracts Management**