



Tēnā koe

On 5 August 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many main benefits have been suspended, lapsed, cancelled, or reduced because the beneficiary entered a relationship, by benefit type, for each year since 2014.*

The Ministry offers a range of support to qualifying clients, in the form of main benefits (e.g. Jobseeker Support, Sole Parent Support), New Zealand Superannuation, and supplementary assistance (e.g. Accommodation Supplement, Disability Allowance). Further information about what assistance the Ministry provides can be found at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/).

Further information about the number of clients receiving benefits and the breakdown of main benefits can be found at the following link: [www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/monthly-reporting/2021/jun/monthly-benefits-update-june-2021.pdf](http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/monthly-reporting/2021/jun/monthly-benefits-update-june-2021.pdf).

Please see enclosed **Appendix A**, containing the following three tables:

**Table One:** The number of working age main benefit cancellations in the calendar years 2014 to 2020 for reasons 'commenced living defacto', 'married', 'reconciled', 'remarried' and 'commenced civil union', by year and benefit type.

**Table Two:** The number of working age main benefit declines in the calendar years 2014 to 2020 for reasons 'commenced living defacto', 'married', 'reconciled', 'remarried' and 'commenced civil union', by year and benefit type.

**Table Three:** The number of working age main benefit suspensions in the calendar years 2014 to 2020 for reasons 'commenced living defacto', 'married', 'reconciled', 'remarried' and 'commenced civil union', by year and benefit type.

Please note that the different benefit types have been abbreviated. The abbreviations are as followed:

- EB is Emergency Benefit
- EMA is Emergency Maintenance Allowance
- IB is Invalid's Benefit (Prior to Welfare Reform July 2013)
- JS is Jobseeker Support
- JSSH is Jobseeker Support Student Hardship
- SLP is Supported Living Payment
- SPS is Sole Parent Support
- SPSO is Sole Parent Support Overseas
- UB related is Unemployment Benefit (Prior to Welfare Reform July 2013)
- WBO is Widow's Benefit Overseas, and
- YP/YPP is Youth payment and Young Parent Payment

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 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 main benefits, 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

*Bridget Saunders*

Bridget Saunders  
**Manager**  
**Issues Resolution**

**Appendix A.**

**Table One: The number of working age main benefit cancellations in the calendar years 2014 to 2020 for reasons 'commenced living defacto', 'married', 'reconciled', 'remarried' and 'commenced civil union', by year and benefit type.**

Benefit	In the calendar year						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EB	27	18	27	15	15	6	21
EMA	93	90	57	42	45	42	39
JS related	2,109	1,950	1,842	1,770	1,752	1,812	2,277
JSSH	21	27	24	15	12	15	9
SLP related	327	315	246	264	270	210	186
SPS	6,126	5,343	4,404	4,155	3,522	3,021	2,790
YP/YPP	90	78	81	126	111	111	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,790</b>	<b>7,818</b>	<b>6,684</b>	<b>6,387</b>	<b>5,730</b>	<b>5,223</b>	<b>5,439</b>

**Table Two: The number of working age main benefit declines in the calendar years 2014 to 2020 for reasons 'commenced living defacto', 'married', 'reconciled', 'remarried' and 'commenced civil union', by year and benefit type.**

Benefit	In the calendar year						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EB	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMA	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
JS related	63	69	57	99	66	66	93
JSSH	3	3	0	0	0	3	0
SLP related	6	3	0	6	3	3	3
SPS	51	39	36	57	63	48	69
YP/YPP	0	0	0	0	6	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>171</b>

**Table Three: The number of working age main benefit suspensions in the calendar years 2014 to 2020 for reasons 'commenced living defacto', 'married', 'reconciled', 'remarried' and 'commenced civil union', by year and benefit type.**

Benefit	In the calendar year						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EB	21	24	12	15	12	6	18
EMA	75	66	45	24	39	30	33
JS related	2,307	2,310	2,061	2,133	1,776	1,698	2,736
JSSH	30	36	21	15	15	21	12
SLP related	681	735	567	579	528	426	405
SPS	4,968	4,356	3,771	3,336	2,835	2,280	2,289
YP/YPP	42	42	63	114	87	72	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,121</b>	<b>7,569</b>	<b>6,543</b>	<b>6,213</b>	<b>5,289</b>	<b>4,530</b>	<b>5,604</b>

**Notes for all Tables:**

- Working age include 18 to 64-year olds.
- Main benefits exclude New Zealand Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Orphans, Unsupported Child benefits and Non beneficiary assistance.
- This is the number of cancellations, declines and suspensions not the number of distinct clients.
- A client may have multiple cancellations, declines and suspensions in the reported period.
- The same clients that appear in suspensions may also be counted in the number of cancellations.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- A value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.