



1 July 2022

Tēnā koe

On 3 June 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many disability allowance requests for Complan or other nutritional supplements have been received in the past five years, broken down by year, and whether the request was accepted or declined?*

Disability Allowance (DA) provides non-taxable assistance to people who have on-going, additional costs because of a disability. The cost of special foods can be included if they are for additional food or food supplements beyond most people's everyday needs, above usual food costs and part of a diet supervised by a register dietitian. You can find out more about special foods in regards to DA, here: <https://workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/disability-allowance/special-foods-01.html>.

The Ministry is unable to provide the number of clients who applied for DA for nutritional supplements and were subsequently declined, as this information is held in notes on individual case files. The Ministry does not report on applications for Complan specifically, as it falls under the DA category 'Vitamins and other nutritional supplements'. The nutritional supplement that a client has applied for is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files.

As such, your request for the number of clients who have been declined DA for nutritional supplements or Complan is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Please see the following table in response to your request. The Ministry is able to provide you with the number of DA applications for 'vitamins and nutritional supplements' that have been granted in the past five years.

Table One: The number of clients on Disability Allowance in receipt of costs for "Vitamins and Nutritional Supplements" for years ending March 2018 to March 2022

Year ending	Number of Clients
March 2018	144
March 2019	474
March 2020	897
March 2021	1,191
March 2022	1,452

Notes:

- This is a count of grants. A client may be granted more than once in a period.
- Some clients may be in receipt of DA for more than one person. In this case, they may be counted more than once.
- This is a count of DA as at end of March of each year, where there is a cost item included in respect of "Vitamins and Nutritional Supplements". Clients of any age or benefit status are included.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual or entity from published data. These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. 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.

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'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 regarding Disability Allowance applications for nutritional supplements, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Saunders

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**Manager Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**