



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

9 May 2022

Dear

On 6 April 2022, you emailed the Office of Hon Carmel Sepuloni requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. How many unemployed work ready in nz?*
- 2. How many unemployed are there total and if there is difference, why are the surplus not work ready?*
- 3. Why aren't these work ready, working?*

On 6 April 2022, this part of your request was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry), in accordance with section 14 of the Act, as it is more closely connected with the functions of the Ministry.

Jobseeker Support (JS) is a temporary benefit paid for up to 52 weeks while clients look for work, are in training for work, or are unable to work due to a health condition, injury or disability.

More information about the eligibility criteria for JS can be found here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/qualifications.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/qualifications.html).

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will answer your request in turn.

- 1. How many unemployed work ready in NZ?*
- 2. How many unemployed are there total and if there is difference, why are the surplus not work ready?*

The Ministry only holds information on people who are receiving a 'Work Ready' (WR) benefit, the Ministry does not hold information on the unemployment rates.

Statistics New Zealand produce the unemployment stats, and their latest release is available on their website; [www.stats.govt.nz/indicators/unemployment-rate](http://www.stats.govt.nz/indicators/unemployment-rate).

The Ministry notes that there may be WR unemployed people whose partner is working, and their income earned puts their joint income over the limit to receive JS. The Ministry does not have any view on that cohort.

Please see below **Table One** which shows the number of people receiving Jobseeker related benefits as at the end of March 2022. This has been broken down by the benefit subcategory.

**Table One: The number of clients receiving a Jobseeker related benefit as at the end of March 2022 by benefit subcategory**

Extracted date	Number of Clients in Receipt of Jobseeker		Total
	Jobseeker Health Condition or Disability	Jobseeker Work Ready	
March 2022	76,791	100,851	<b>177,642</b>

**Notes for Table One:**

- The table includes working age only (18 to 64 years).
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry 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.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

*3. Why aren't these work ready, working?*

There are a number of reasons a person may not be able to return to work quickly. Economic recovery has moved at different speeds across different industries, and people may need retraining in some instances. There are also a number of individual circumstances that make entering work difficult. Compared to unemployed people (people without current employment who are actively seeking employment) who are not supported by a main benefit, unemployed JS – WR recipients may have less employment history, lower qualifications, and have experienced broader life challenges, such as disadvantage during childhood and interactions with the Justice system.

The Ministry has a range of employment and work readiness services which we encourage clients to make full use of. We have Work Brokers, training and work experience programmes, Employment Coordinators for clients with health and disability issues, and an online recruitment tool – just to name a few. More information about these programmes can be found here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/work/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/work/index.html).

The principles and purposes of the Act 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
- 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 unemployed and work ready, 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.

Yours sincerely

*Bridget Saunders*

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**Manager, Issue Resolution  
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