



Dear 

On 27 May 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- 1. The total amount that the Ministry of Social Development has spent on assistance for Rent Arrears, either through a Recoverable Assistance Payment or an Advance Payment of Benefit.*
- 2. The total number of people that have received assistance from the Ministry of Social Development for Rent Arrears*
- 3. The total number of grants given by the Ministry of Social Development to assist with the payment of Rent Arrears*

The Ministry may assist people to pay for rent arrears as long as they meet the income and asset test, and are not able to meet the cost by any other means. This hardship assistance includes the Recoverable Assistance Payment and Advance Payments of Benefit.

Please find enclosed a table showing the number of grants the Ministry has provided to assist with the payment of rent arrears, the amount granted, and the number of distinct clients, by quarter end since 31 March 2017.

You will notice an increase in the number of clients and number of grants granted since March 2017. Increasing living costs are placing more people in difficult positions and this is reflected in the rise in demand of all types of hardship grants across the country. The increase we are seeing in grants also reflect the efforts the Ministry has made to ensure people know where to access assistance to meet essential needs – to this end, the Ministry has made it easier for people to access grants through the Ministry's online system, MyMSD and over the phone, as well as in service centres.

The Ministry publishes Benefit Fact Sheets which contain quarterly statistics, including hardship assistance as at the end of each quarter. This information, including details about national trends is available at: [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/latest-quarterly-results/hardship-assistance.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/latest-quarterly-results/hardship-assistance.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 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 regarding assistance provided for rent arrears 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, 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



Cassandra Wise  
**Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery**

**Table One: The number of grants the Ministry has provided to assist with the payment of rent arrears, the amount granted, and the number of distinct clients, by quarter end since 31 March 2017.**

<b>Quarter Ending</b>	<b>Number of Grants</b>	<b>Amount Granted</b>	<b>Number of Distinct Clients</b>
<b>Mar 17</b>	7,202	\$5,048,998.90	6,645
<b>Jun 17</b>	6,714	\$4,621,232.73	6,184
<b>Sep 17</b>	6,810	\$4,587,887.75	6,201
<b>Dec 17</b>	6,756	\$4,566,213.18	6,196
<b>Mar 18</b>	7,589	\$5,632,162.95	6,876
<b>Jun 18</b>	7,224	\$5,197,720.05	6,491
<b>Sep 18</b>	7,030	\$4,864,498.96	6,311
<b>Dec 18</b>	7,888	\$5,602,236.81	7,076
<b>Mar 19</b>	9,807	\$7,635,975.65	8,656

**Notes:**

- The number of grants is a count of grants not a count of clients. Clients who received multiple grants in a quarter will be counted more than once.
- The number of distinct clients is a count of clients within a quarter. Clients will only be counted once per quarter, even if they received multiple grants.