



10 OCT 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

On 13 August 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many Community Service Cards are currently in use.*
- *A breakdown of current cards granted to those with main benefits versus those with low-incomes but without the benefits that automatically grants one approval for a CSC.*
- *If possible these two sets of figures for FY 2018/2019, 2017/18, 2016/17, and 2015/16. If these numbers are better broken down in calendar years or some other format happy to take that instead.*
- *If it exists, data on the amount of people who apply for a CSC but are not granted one, for the same years.*
- *If it exists, data on the amount of people who are prompted or given paperwork to apply for a CSC but do not complete the assessment.*
- *Any research commissioned or carried out by MSD into barriers stopping people accessing Community Service Cards.*
- *The policy design paperwork (if any exists) backing the current application process for non-beneficiary CSC seekers.*

The Ministry of Social Development administers Community Services Cards (CSC) on behalf of the Ministry of Health. The cards are available to low or middle-income earners to enable them and their families to access subsidised health services and are issued on an annual basis and valid for 12 months. People who are receiving an income-tested benefit or payment or are living in public housing are automatically issued a card.

For those not automatically sent a card, an application form will need to be completed and provided to the Ministry, along with the required supporting information, so the application can be processed. In some cases, applicants may be asked to provide additional verification of their income. Generally, this is because the Ministry doesn't already hold these details, as it does for existing clients. Further information about eligibility and the application process for Community Services Cards is available on the Ministry's website here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html)

To make it easier for people who are needing advice or help with their application, the Ministry has a dedicated Community Services Card team and 0800 number (0800

999 999). The Ministry continually works to make its processes more streamlined. For example, we introduced combined SuperGold/Community Services Cards to remove the need for those who qualify, to have to carry two cards.

Please find enclosed, Table One which shows a breakdown of all CSC's issued broken down by application types for the fiscal years 2016-2019, and the totals for each. This table covers the first three points of your request.

Table Two shows the number of, and reason for, CSC application declines for the fiscal years 2016 -2019. This table answers point four of your request.

The remaining three questions of your request (points five, six, and seven) are refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as the information does not exist, or despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found. The Ministry has not carried out any research into barriers stopping people from accessing Community Services Cards, or undertaken policy design for the application process for non-beneficiary CSC seekers.

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 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 Community Services Cards approval and decline reasons, 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



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Bridget Saunders  
**Acting Manager, Issues Resolution Service Delivery**

**Table One: Number of Community Services Card's issued as at the end of June 2016-2019 broken down by type of application.**

Application Type	As at the end of June			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Low income (below cut off)	15,121	12,773	11,714	10,761
Recipients of full family tax credits	103,474	93,974	84,224	77,223
Recipients of War Veterans Pension	8,358	7,835	7,122	6,812
Recipients of Student Allowance and their spouses	61,030	53,504	55,395	45,894
Recipients of income tested benefits	379,756	378,696	377,724	158,746
Recipients of NZ Superannuation	266,261	264,570	264,916	261,702
Recipients of Rest Home Subsidy	23,467	23,037	23,060	23,072
Families	9,916	8,323	7,931	5,761
Housing	0	0	0	57,933
Accommodation Supplement	0	0	0	306,918
<b>Total</b>	<b>867,383</b>	<b>842,712</b>	<b>832,086</b>	<b>954,822</b>

**Notes for Table One:**

- Application types are the basis on which the CSC was granted.
- Clients may be eligible for a CSC under more than one reason but are only recorded once under the application type, for this table.

**Table Two: The number of Community Services card applications declined during the fiscal years 2016 – 2019.**

Reason	As at the end of June				Total
	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Declined Applicant's Request	31	30	27	34	122
Insufficient Identification	6,478	4,473	5,822	7,552	24,325
Verification Not Provided-CSC	1,386	1,124	2,350	1,737	6,597
Partner Details Not Supplied-CSC	14	5	13	2	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,909</b>	<b>5,632</b>	<b>8,212</b>	<b>9,325</b>	<b>31,078</b>