



16 OCT 2019

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your email of 18 September 2019 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Can you please advise on what steps are being taken to make the application process easier?*
- *How many CSC holders were there prior to 1 December 2018?*
- *How many CSC holders are there now?*
- *How many people does MSD estimate are eligible for a CSC but who have not obtained one? If MSD has questions 3 to 5 data broken-down by age and ethnicity can I please have it?*
- *How many people does MSD estimate do not have a RealMe profile?*
- *How many people does MSD estimate do not have a valid driver's license and/or passport or other acceptable proof of identity on hand to obtain a CSC?*

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

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. For people who are not already clients of the Ministry, the application process can take longer because the Ministry does not already hold information about them. The Ministry has an 0800 number (0800 999 999) with dedicated staff who can provide help and advice to people applying for a CSC.

Low-income families are required to provide details of their income to qualify for a Community Services Card. The Ministry understands that this can be a hurdle for some people, however the Ministry must ensure applicants meet the eligibility criteria. More information regarding the application process and eligibility can be found here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html#null.

As at the end of June 2018, there were 861,375 active Community Services Cards, and by the end of June 2019 this figure increased to 978,524.

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You have requested estimates of the number of people who are eligible for a Community Services card but have not obtained one, the number of people who do not have a RealMe profile, and the number of people who do not have a valid form of proof of identity. I am unable to provide this information under section 18(g) as the Ministry does not hold such estimates and I have no reason to believe it is held by any other government department.

Information about the proof of identify required to apply for a Community Services Card is available at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/our-services/what-to-bring/community-services-card.html#null

If an individual is struggling to meet the costs of obtaining Proof of Identity documentation, Work and Income may be able to assist.

The Department of Internal Affairs is the agency responsible for the stewardship of identify-related matters in New Zealand. You might be interested in the work at: www.dia.govt.nz/Regulatory-Stewardship---Identity-and-Passports

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 and attachments 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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Community Services Card application declines, 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.

Yours sincerely



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