



18 FEB 2020

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email dated 30 January 2020 to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, answers to the following questions:

- 1. The example numbers used in your table below are very small. MSD benefit fact sheets data tables for Service Centre and Benefit Type, Dec 2019, indicate numbers considerably higher are being suppressed. What are the numerical limits guiding the application of suppression?*
- 2. MSD benefit fact sheets data tables for Service Centre and Benefit Type, Dec 2019, contains a note: "Auckland Childcare Processing Centre has not been included in Auckland table." If this Centre "specialises in Childcare Subsidy processing" what benefit data does the note refer to?*

In response to your first question, regarding secondary cell suppression, the Ministry follows the principles published by StatsNZ. They can be found on the StatsNZ website at the following web-link:

[http://archive.stats.govt.nz/about\\_us/legisln-policies-protocols/confidentiality-of-info-supplied-to-snz/safeguarding-confidentiality.aspx#social](http://archive.stats.govt.nz/about_us/legisln-policies-protocols/confidentiality-of-info-supplied-to-snz/safeguarding-confidentiality.aspx#social)

There is no defined numerical limit associated with secondary suppression, due to the requirement to suppress a second cell to ensure client confidentiality. However, the Ministry attempts, if possible, to suppress a secondary cell that has the lowest value or has the least impact on the data value. StatsNZ's website notes that:

*"When applying the secondary suppression technique we make a judgement about which cell should be suppressed to minimise the loss of information. This decision will depend on how the table will be used. Often cells that represent fewer respondents will be suppressed."*

In regard to your second and final question, the note in the Service Centre Tables does state "Auckland Childcare Processing Centre has not been included in Auckland table." This is because processing centres, unless combined with a frontline centre, are not included in the Service Centre tables, an example of this combination is the Nelson Service Centre. A small number of clients are registered at this Service Centre. To conduct certain actions in the Ministry's Client Management System (CMS), staff assign the client to themselves, as a case manager, this registers the client at this Service Centre.

Childcare Subsidy is not a benefit, rather it is a supplementary assistance, but staff may need to assign the client to their Service Centre to perform other actions in CMS.

Please note that there are 5 different figures for benefit numbers in Auckland, as shown in Table One below, this is dependent on how the clients are counted (where they live, or which service centre they are in) or about the size or scale of the regional boundaries.

<b>Table One: Number of working-age main benefit recipients in the Auckland region, by region type, December 2019</b>	
<b>Region Type</b>	<b>Total All main benefits</b>
Auckland Service Centres	<b>89,178</b>
Auckland Boards	<b>85,323</b>
Auckland Regional Council	<b>90,326</b>
Auckland Work and Income Region	<b>89,187</b>
Auckland Territorial Authority	<b>90,881</b>

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 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 secondary cell suppression and Auckland Childcare Processing Centre, 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



Lewanna Pentecost

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