



25 JUN 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

On 15 May 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of applications for the job seeker benefit that MSD has declined due to excess income since March 20.*
- *The number of applications for sole parent support that MSD has declined due to excess income since March 20.*

Welfare assistance is targeted at those who require support and who meet the eligibility criteria, which are based on family circumstances and residential status. The eligibility criteria assesses income per household not by individuals, with household income being comprised of the income of the applicant and their partner (where applicable).

Please find two tables attached as Appendix A which answers both aspects of your request. To provide a complete picture, the Ministry has included the number of Jobseeker Support and Sole Parent Support applications processed and granted from March 2020 to May 2020.

Due to the Ministry's reporting conventions, we are unable to provide this data from the requested date of 20 March 2020. We have therefore included the number of declines due to excess income for all of March 2020. While your request was made on 15 May 2020, we have also included the number of declines due to excess household income for all of May 2020.

You will notice a sharp increase in declines for the Jobseeker Support benefit in April 2020. As a result of job loss from the impacts of COVID-19, the Ministry received a significant increase in new benefit applications.

The Ministry's Monthly Benefit Update report shows that at the end of April 2020, recipients of the Jobseeker Support increased by 38,425 since February 2020, while recipients of the Sole Parent Support increased by 2,663. Overall, the Ministry saw a 13.4% increase in main benefit recipients in April 2020. As a point of comparison, the Ministry saw a 1.6% increase in main benefit recipients in March 2020. These reports can be found here: [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/covid-19/index.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/covid-19/index.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. 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 number Sole Parent Support and Jobseeker Support applications 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Bridget Saunders

**Manager, Issue and Resolution, Service Delivery**

**Appendix A:**

**Table One: The number of Job Seeker Support applications processed, granted and declined due to excess income from March 2020 to May 2020, broken down by month**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Processed</b>	<b>Granted</b>	<b>Declined Excess Income</b>
<b>March 2020</b>	20,711	16,559	162
<b>April 2020</b>	38,816	32,039	1,019
<b>May 2020</b>	18,105	14,413	503
<b>Total</b>	<b>77,632</b>	<b>63,011</b>	<b>1,684</b>

**Table Two: The number of Sole Parent Support applications processed, granted and declined due to excess income from March 2020 to May 2020, broken down by month**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Processed</b>	<b>Granted</b>	<b>Declined Excess Income</b>
<b>March 2020</b>	3,390	2,644	16
<b>April 2020</b>	3,325	2,382	54
<b>May 2020</b>	2,235	1,719	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,950</b>	<b>6,745</b>	<b>96</b>

**Notes:**

- The notes relate to both Table One and Table Two.
- This is a count of applications processed, granted and declined, not a count of people.
- A person may have more than one application in the period
- Processed applications are the sum of all approved and all declined applications
- Household income is comprised of the income of the applicant and their partner (where applicable).