



19 August 2022

Tēnā koe

On 9 August 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *annual figures for those receiving the Winter Energy Payment by Territorial Authority since 2018.*

The Winter Energy Payment (WEP) is a non-taxable benefit paid to people in receipt of a main benefit, New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) or Veteran's Pension (VP) to support their household heating costs during the winter period.

To receive WEP a client must:

- be receiving a qualifying benefit (or portion of it) during the winter period. Qualifying benefits include Sole Parent Support, Supported Living Payment, Jobseeker Support, Jobseeker Support Student Hardship, Emergency Benefit, Emergency Maintenance Allowance, Youth Payment, Young Parent Payment, NZS and VP;
- be either the person granted a qualifying benefit or their partner, and the qualifying benefit (or portion of it) is paid to the client;
- not be disqualified from receiving the WEP;
- not have chosen to opt out of receiving the WEP; and
- be living in New Zealand, and not be outside of New Zealand during the period that the WEP can be paid for more than 28 days during any one or more absences.

With the exception of the Emergency Benefit, a client must have New Zealand Citizenship, permanent residence or hold a residence class visa to receive the above qualifying benefits for the WEP.

More information about WEP can be found at this link:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/winter-energy-payment/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/winter-energy-payment/index.html).

Clients do not have to apply for WEP, it is automatically paid to those receiving a main benefit, NZS or VP and meet all other eligibility criteria. People may voluntarily opt out of receiving WEP. If a person opted out of receiving WEP then they would no longer receive payments until they decided to apply for the WEP again. The Ministry does not issue back payments for any time where the applicant had opted out of receiving a WEP.

Please see **Table One** enclosed, showing the number of clients receiving Winter Energy Payment, broken down by Territorial Local Authority, as at the end of June each year.

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'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, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

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