



27 April 2023

Tēnā koe

On 30 March 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *What is the total number of persons supported by a main benefit – the number of adults and children. The figures as at 31st December 2022 would be great.*

The Ministry, through Work and Income, provides recoverable and non-recoverable financial assistance to help people meet an immediate need for essential items such as food, health costs, power, and other costs.

These payments are available to any person as long as they meet the income and asset test, and they are unable to meet the cost for an essential need from any other source.

Work and Income ensures that people receive their correct entitlement to any other financial assistance as part of the application and assessment process and assists people to manage their costs in the longer term, not just with immediate and urgent assistance. It is important to understand why the client cannot meet these costs, to provide the most appropriate form of assistance.

More information about financial assistance and eligibility can be found on the Work and Income website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/index.html. Main benefits the Ministry administers include:

- Emergency Benefit – an income and asset tested benefit payable to people in hardship and who are unable to earn enough for themselves, and any dependent family, and cannot receive another benefit.
- Emergency Maintenance Allowance – a form of Emergency Benefit which provides income support for sole parents with one or more dependent children if they do not meet the specific criteria for Sole Parent Support or Young Parent Payment, and they cannot receive any other benefit.

- Jobseeker Support – a temporary benefit paid for up to 52 weeks while clients look for work, are in training for work or are unable to work due to a health condition, injury, or disability.
- Jobseeker Student Hardship – income support for full-time students who do not have employment during vacation periods.
- Sole Parent Support - income support for sole parents with one or more dependent children.
- Supported Living Payment – for people who are unable to work because they are permanently and severely restricted in their capacity for work due to a health condition, injury, disability, being totally blind, or needing to care full-time for a person at home.
- Youth Payment – for young people who have no dependent children and are not being supported by their parents, or they are/have been married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship.
- Young Parent Payment – for young people who have a dependent child or children and are single or are/have been married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship.

Please refer to **Table One** in the **Appendix** for the number of working age main benefits and the number of children included, as at 31 December 2022.

The Ministry regularly publishes Benefit Fact Sheets which may be of interest to you. These provide a high-level view of trends in benefit receipt, including breakdowns by a number of demographics: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/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'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 main benefit statistics, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Saunders

Bridget Saunders
**Manager Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**

Appendix

Table One: Number of working age main benefits and number of children included as at 31 December 2022.

As at month end		Number of benefits	Number of children
December 2022	Emergency Benefit	2,019	924
	Emergency Maintenance Allowance	624	1,017
	Jobseeker Student Hardship	6,210	1,533
	Job Seeker related	170,100	39,318
	Sole Parent Support	73,563	146,361
	Supported Living Payments related	100,038	18,495
	Youth Payment and Young Parent Payment	1,347	1,248
Total		353,904	208,899

Table Notes:

- The table includes working age only (18 to 64 years).
- Main benefits exclude NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.