



7 March 2023

Tēnā koe

On 17 February 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

Under the Official Information Act could I please request the following information regarding the job seeker benefit:

- 1. Average time spent on benefit?*
- 2. Longest time spent on benefit?*

Jobseeker Support (JS) is a temporary benefit paid for up to 52 weeks while clients look for work, are in training for work or unable to work due to a health condition, injury or disability. If a client still requires JS after 52 weeks, they must complete the 52-week reapplication process. You can find more information regarding JS and qualifications at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/introduction.html.

Often those who are on JS for a longer period have more complex and significant barriers to employment. The Ministry provides tailored support for those who have more significant barriers to employment, with assistance that includes help with training and upskilling.

Despite government support available during the COVID-19 pandemic such as the Wage Subsidy, a large number of people still lost their jobs, in particular women and young people.

Economic recovery moves at different speeds across different industries, and people may need retraining in some instances. There are also a number of individual circumstances that make entering work difficult.

While JS is available to people who can usually work full-time, it also includes people who can only work part-time or can't look for work at the moment, for example because they have a health condition, injury or disability.

To qualify for JS on health condition, injury or disability grounds the client must meet certain medical qualifications.

The client must be:

- limited in their capacity or unable to work full-time due to a health condition, injury or disability, or
- in employment, but because of a health condition, injury or disability cannot work or can only work at a reduced level.

To support their application for JS (health condition, injury or disability) a client must provide a medical certificate from a health practitioner.

Please refer to the table below for the average, longest and median continuous duration for JS clients.

Table One: The average, maximum, and median continuous duration for the month ending January 2023 for working age Jobseeker Support clients.

Average continuous duration	Maximum continuous duration	Median continuous duration
1,211 days	16,139 days	578 days

Table notes:

- Working age includes clients aged 18 to 64.
- Continuous duration is how long the current recipients of a benefit (or benefit group) have been continuously receiving a benefit in the wider benefit system, including time on all benefits except Unsupported Child's Benefit, Orphan's Benefit, New Zealand Superannuation, Veteran's Pension and non-beneficiary assistance.
- This table includes both Jobseeker Support Work Ready (JS Work Ready) and Jobseeker Support Health Condition & Disability (JS HC&D)
- JS Work Ready related includes Jobseeker Support Work Ready and Jobseeker Support Work Ready Hardship.
- JS HC&D related includes Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability and Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability Hardship.

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 average and longest continuous duration on Jobseeker Support, 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**