



24 March 2023

Tēnā koe

On 3 March 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. Can I please request the number value, and unique persons receiving civil defence payments paid, by territorial authority since the start of 2023*
- 2. Can I please also request any figures showing the level of requests, and support provided, for those without accommodation following the 2023 weather events, again broke down by TLA*
- 3. Can I please request historical data showing benefit recipients, broken down by usual benefit classes, at a SA2/area unit level, from the March 2019 quarter to the December 2022 quarter.*

Civil Defence Payments (CDP) are available to meet the immediate needs of people affected by a civil defence emergency or adverse event. For example, those affected by the January and February 2023 North Island floods and/or Cyclone Gabrielle.

CDP are non-taxable and do not affect a person's eligibility for most other forms of social assistance. This is due to the exceptional circumstances of those affected by a civil defence emergency or an adverse event.

More information about CDP can be found at the following link:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/civil-defence-payment-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/civil-defence-payment-01.html)

I will now respond to your questions in turn.

- 1. Can I please request the number value, and unique persons receiving civil defence payments paid, by territorial authority since the start of 2023*

3. *Can I please request historical data showing benefit recipients, broken down by usual benefit classes, at a SA2/area unit level, from the March 2019 quarter to the December 2022 quarter.*

In the attached **Appendix**, you will find the following tables:

- **Table One:** The number of distinct clients who received a CDP and the amount granted during the period 1 January 2023 to 28 February 2023, broken down by Territorial Local Authority (TLA).
  - **Table Two:** The number of current working age benefits, as at the quarter end, for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022, broken down by area unit.
2. *Can I please also request any figures showing the level of requests, and support provided, for those without accommodation following the 2023 weather events, again broke down by TLA*

The Ministry is unable to provide you with figures for those without accommodation, as the accommodation status of those in receipt of CDP following the 2023 extreme weather events is held on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I am refusing your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

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 and attachments 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 regarding civil defence payment and main benefit data, 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

*Bridget Saunders*

Bridget Saunders  
**Manager Issue Resolution**  
**Service Delivery**