



21 May 2024

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 22 April 2024, requesting information about sanctions in West Coast. I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision set out below.

I have also included some general information obligations and sanctions for your further information.

### **General information about obligations and sanctions**

People who receive payments from the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) agree to meet a range of obligations, which are made clear when applying for a benefit. The obligations people need to meet depend on which type of benefit payment they receive.

For Jobseekers, many obligations are connected to finding or preparing for work, including meeting with us to discuss next steps in their job search. If a client does not meet these obligations, without a good and sufficient reason, their benefit payments could reduce or stop until they re-comply.

Any decision to reduce or pause benefit payments is never made quickly or taken lightly, and clients are offered opportunities to re-comply before their payments are reduced. It's important to note that when any steps are taken to reduce a client's benefit payments, the Ministry works with the client to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

### **Response to your request for information**

Please find in the attached **Appendix, Table One** providing the number of sanctions imposed on working main benefits in Greymouth and Westport during the March 2023 and March 2024 quarters, this has been broken down by sanction reasons.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**