



17 September 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email dated 20 August 2024 to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) in which you requested the following information:

"Am I imagining this [re: MSD dental grant data]?"

But earlier this year did MSD share a summary of the first year of the MSD Grant demographic data?

- *Average age? Ethnicity? Grant \$ size?*

And if not is this data available?"

The Ministry emailed you on 29 August 2024 to suggest that you refine your request, as it was broad in scope and likely to be partially refused under section 18(f) of the Act). The Ministry did not receive a response from you.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Your request for information is very broad, and substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all information within scope of your request. I have therefore decided to refuse 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.

In the absence of receiving a refinement of your information request, the Ministry has interpreted your request as referring to the non-recoverable Special Need Grant (SNG) for essential dental treatment and data relating to the first 12 months that the grant's limit increased from \$300 to \$1000.

As you may be aware, Ministry clients became eligible for the increased grant amount from 1 December 2022. You can find information about this change, which

was introduced in Budget 2022, at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/budget/2022/factsheets/special-needs-grants-for-dental-treatment.html.

Please refer to **Appendix One**, which is a spreadsheet containing five tables setting out a selection of demographic data and dental treatment financial assistance approved for the period 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023.

As you will see, we are providing you with data for the SNG for essential dental treatment and the Advance Payment of benefit (Advance) for essential dental treatment. Please refer to the following links for further information:

- SNG for essential dental treatment: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/essential-dental-treatment.html
- Advance for essential dental treatment: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/advance-payment-of-benefit/dental-treatment-01.html.
- Summary of assistance available through the Ministry to pay for dental treatment: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/health-and-disability/dental-treatment.html.

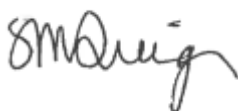
Please note that, since December 2021, the Ministry has reported ethnicity data as "Total Response Ethnicity" (TRE). This ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept. TRE means that if a person identifies with more than one ethnic group, they are counted in each applicable group. Because a client can choose more than one ethnicity response, the total number of ethnicity responses will be greater than the number of clients.

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.

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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services