



5 November 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 11 September 2025 requesting all information relating to the educational qualifications of people receiving Jobseeker Support and other main benefits.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below. Some sections of your request are grouped together and reordered for clarity.

- *The number of current beneficiaries (all main benefits and Jobseeker Support) broken down by age group (most recent quarter).*
- *For comparison, the total number of all beneficiaries, broken down by age group, for each of the past 5 years.*

I refer you to the Benefit Fact Sheets published on the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry's) website – in particular the Excel spreadsheet 'National level data tables – June 2025,' here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/index.html.

- *Confirm what education or qualification fields MSD currently records on client files;*

There are several fields that a client can fill out as part of their Jobseeker profile when applying for Jobseeker Support. These fields include:

- (NCEA): 1-79 credits
- (NCEA): Level 1: > = 80 credits
- (NCEA): Level 2: > = 80 credits
- (NCEA): Level 3: > = 80 credits
- (NCEA): Level 4: > = 72 credits
- 3 or More SC Passes or Equiv.
- Degree or professional qualifications
- Degree or Professional Quals
- Less than 3 SC Passes or Equiv.

- No Formal School Quals or <3 yrs
- Other School Quals
- Post Secondary Quals
- Post-secondary school qualifications
- Scholarship Bursary HSC
- Sixth Form Cert UE or Equiv.

Please note, that this list does not include industry qualifications.

These fields are currently being reviewed / updated as part of the Ministry's work on the Digital Employment Service (DES) that will occur in March 2026.

Through the implementation of DES, jobseekers will soon be able to manage and generate a CV themselves using the information already in their Jobseeker Profile.

The DES will transform the ability of jobseekers to connect with employers and gain upskilling opportunities to help them find and maintain sustainable employment. This will enable the Ministry to far better support those at risk of poor labour market outcomes (including those at high risk of long-term benefit receipt).

This change means that clients can update their own education and qualification information more frequently, as this information will enable greater access to jobs, support and training opportunities in the client's local area, including through proactive digital contact; and they can be matched to and notified of suitable jobs based on their individual circumstances and skills.

- *The number of current beneficiaries who are university-qualified (highest qualification = bachelor degree or higher), broken down by age group (most recent quarter).*
- *The number of current beneficiaries who have graduated from university in the last 5 years, broken down by age group.*
- *The number of beneficiaries who are university-qualified, broken down by age group, for each of the past 5 years.*

Currently, the Ministry's reporting on the education and qualifications of our clients is not consistent. These fields are not always completed by staff or required to grant assistance, and as shown in the list of fields available on client files, some duplicate fields exist.

To assess the education and qualification level of all beneficiaries, the Ministry would need to manually review thousands of client files to determine the education level or qualifications held by the client. This information would then need to be standardised across files to be able to pull an accurate data set on the education of each client in receipt of financial assistance over the past five years.

To provide you with this information, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, requires substantial collation. 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 requests 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 total amount spent on Jobseeker Support, specifically for people aged 18–24, for the most recent financial year.*

The Ministry can only report on the total expenditure for Jobseeker Support and Emergency Benefit – this currently is available on page 182 of the 2025 Annual Report on the Ministry's website, here: www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/annual-report/2025/msd-annual-report-2025.pdf.

To provide this expenditure broken down by age demographic, the Ministry would need to review rates paid per week on each client file to determine the amount paid. There are several rates available for Jobseeker Support and rate paid may differ on a weekly basis depending on a client's individual circumstances – for example, if a client's benefit is suspended temporarily due to an obligation failure. More information on varying rates for Jobseeker Support is available on MAP, here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/main-benefits-rates/jobseeker-support-current.html.

The diversion of Ministry resources to provide this information would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, requires substantial collusion. 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 requests 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.

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.



Anna Graham
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