



15 September 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 23 June 2025, requesting a breakdown of beneficiaries experiencing mental health or behavioural issues, and reports about mental health and Ministry clients.

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.

I have also included some general information at the end of this letter, for your further information.

Question 1: Specifically may I find out the below information on a monthly basis from June 2015 to the present: The number and percentage of people on a benefit because of mental health or behavioural issues

Question 2: The number and percentage of people making incapacity claims because of mental health or behavioural issues

Please refer to the attached **Appendix, Table One** which provides the number and percentage of primary Jobseeker Support Health Condition & Disability and Supported Living Payment clients with Psychological or Psychiatric condition as at end of month from June 2015 to June 2025.

The part of this request that asks for the number and percentage of clients receiving a benefit or making incapacity claims because of behavioural issues is refused under 18(f) of the Act. 'Behavioural issues' is not a diagnoses but rather usually symptoms of a health condition or disability. As this is not a diagnosis, if this information is held, it may be stored on individual client files or medical notes which would require substantial manual collation to respond to this part of your request. 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.

Question 3: The number and percentage of people making incapacity claims by the top three issues

Please refer to the attached **Appendix, Table Two** which provides the number and percentage of primary Jobseeker Support Health Condition & Disability and Supported Living Payment clients with one of the top 3 incapacities as at end of month from June 2015 to June 2025.

Question 4: The number and percentage of mental health referrals for people on a benefit

This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this document does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

The Ministry does not have a formal referral pathway either to or from mental health services. We do maintain a relationship with local mental health services in our regions. On occasion, these services may suggest to a client that they contact us to make or review an application for support; or the service may contact their local site on behalf of the client to book in a client interview, for the purposes of assessing entitlement.

Question 5: All reports, advice, briefings, and similar correspondence about mental health issues and MSD clients, and whether this is a growing problem.

This part of your request is very broad, and substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all documents within scope of your request. As such, I 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.

General Information

People experiencing mental health challenges can find it harder to secure employment and are more likely to experience unemployment than those without mental health conditions. This gap is especially large when a person's mental health has a significant impact on their everyday life. Mental health outcomes are influenced by a range of biological, psychological, social, economic, and environmental factors. People who experience greater exposure to adversity are at a heightened risk to face mental health challenges across the life course.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services