



23 September 2025

Tēnā koe

**Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 11 July 2025, requesting information about disability support for intellectual disability and/or autism as a primary diagnosis, including age and criteria.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

As requested, please find attached in **Appendix One**, data for the total number of people who receive disability support for intellectual disability and/or autism as their primary diagnosis required, for FY 22/23 to FY 24/25 broken down by:

- Number who have moderate to high support needs
- Age group
- Those who are aged 16-25
- Local government region

In regard to your second follow up question, I have answered each question as follows:

- *Details on the formal tools, frameworks, or criteria currently used to assess the severity or level of a person's disability (e.g. mild, moderate, severe).*
- *Details on the formal tools, frameworks, or criteria currently used to assess their support needs, particularly in determining eligibility for funded disability support services.*

Assessments are not completed based on severity of a person's disability, rather they are based on the level of supports that are required. Assessments are carried out by the Needs Assessment Service Coordination Association (NASC), who use the Support Package Allocation Guide (SPA) to determine disability support needs. I have attached a copy of this Guide to the response. I have also attached a copy of the Disability Support Services Operational Policy – Eligibility' which sets out eligibility criteria.

Please also see the following link [www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Needs-Assessment-and-Service-Co-ordination1.pdf](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/assets/Needs-Assessment-and-Service-Co-ordination1.pdf) for further information on eligibility.

The Minister for Disability Issues, Hon Louise Upston, has made a recent announcement regarding changes to DSS needs assessment, allocation, and flexible funding arrangements, including respite and support for carers.

With the changes referred to in the Minister's announcement, people will have more choice and control in their use of flexible funding, and nationally consistent processes for assessing and allocating services and supports for disabled people will be introduced. The changes will create a fairer, more consistent, transparent, and sustainable disability support system, and will support the Government to make the best use of resources. These changes will come into effect from February 2026. You can read the Minister's announcement and further information about the upcoming changes at the following links:

[www.beehive.govt.nz/release/improved-support-disabled-new-zealanders](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/improved-support-disabled-new-zealanders) and  
[www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/about-us/news/changes-to-assessments-and-allocations-and-flexible-funding](http://www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/about-us/news/changes-to-assessments-and-allocations-and-flexible-funding)

- *Copies or descriptions of any standardized assessment instruments, decision-making guidelines, or training materials used by assessors in this process.*

Each of the nationwide NASCs have their own assessment forms and/or outcome plans. They all have their own individual training materials so as there are no "*standardized assessment instruments, decision-making guidelines, or training materials used by assessors in this process*", therefore I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as they do not exist.

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 nui

pp.



Anna Graham  
**General Manager**  
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