



3 APR 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 5 March 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Out of the 498,000 grants for food that were made in 2017:*
  - *How many of these grants were requested by women, and what is the age group distribution for these grants?*
  - *What were the main products purchased with the Payment Card?*

Work and Income, a service line of the Ministry of Social Development, provides hardship assistance to help people pay for essential items or services they need urgently. Hardship assistance includes Special Needs Grants which provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to people to meet immediate needs, such as a food grant.

More information about food grants is available on Work and Income's website at: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html).

The table below shows the total number of Special Needs Grants granted for food in the 2017 calendar year, broken down by female clients and age.

<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total (male and female)</b>
16	230	<b>308</b>
17	653	<b>938</b>
18-19	8,867	<b>14,358</b>
20-24	45,013	<b>66,831</b>
25-29	57,261	<b>82,204</b>
30-34	47,207	<b>69,435</b>
35-39	38,403	<b>58,254</b>
40-44	31,615	<b>49,884</b>
45-49	29,320	<b>48,212</b>
50-54	22,650	<b>38,987</b>
55-59	16,959	<b>29,695</b>
60-64	11,643	<b>20,814</b>
65+	8,954	<b>15,817</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>318,775</b>	<b>495,737</b>

**Note:**

- One SNG for food is not included in this table as the details held are incomplete i.e. Unspecified gender and age.

To enable you to interpret these statistics, you might be interested to know that 58 per cent of all clients receiving a main benefit as at the end of December 2017, are female. As at the end of December 2017, 32.2 per cent of clients in receipt of a benefit are between 25 and 29 years and 59.5 per cent are in receipt of a Sole Parent Support, of which 92 per cent are female.

The above statistics along with further information regarding benefit and hardship payments is available on the Ministry's website. The Benefit Fact Sheets provide a high-level view of trends in benefit information over the past five years. The Fact Sheets present numbers and characteristics of clients in receipt of a benefit at the end of the current quarter, and for the equivalent quarter one year ago and five years ago. The Benefit Fact Sheets are available at: [www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/2017/benefit-fact-sheets-december-2017.pdf](http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/2017/benefit-fact-sheets-december-2017.pdf)

The Ministry is unable to provide you with details of the main products purchased with a Payment Card for 2017, as itemised receipts are not held, or required to be held, by the Ministry. Therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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 this response, 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.

Yours sincerely



Elisabeth Brunt  
**General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services**