



11 APR 2018



Dear 

On 14 February 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *Are you able to tell me how many people access the Blind Subsidy indicated in se 40 J*
- *How many people access Supported Living Payments who have employment of more than 15 hours per week*

On 12 March 2018, you clarified that the second part of your request relates to the number of blind people that access Supported Living Payments who have employment of more than 15 hours per week.

As you will be aware, the Blind Clients Subsidy is an additional allowance of 25 per cent of the average personal earnings that can be paid to a totally blind person who is receiving Supported Living Payment on the ground of health condition, injury, disability or total blindness.

As at the end of December 2017, there were no clients in receipt of a Blind Clients Subsidy.

A very small number of people have claimed the Blind Clients Subsidy since 2012. This is because of the total income cut-out points. For example, a single person over 18 years of age paid at the adult minimum wage would not qualify for the subsidy when working 10 or more hours a week. Additionally, every dollar of other assistance paid, such as Disability Allowance or Accommodation Supplement, reduces the assessed amount of subsidy by a dollar.

Additional information regarding the Blind Clients Subsidy is available on Work and Income's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/blind-clients-subsidy-01.html

I can advise you that as at the end of December 2017, 958 clients in receipt of Supported Living Payment have their incapacity recorded as blindness.

Information regarding the number of hours a client works is held in notes on individual client files. As such, I am unable to provide you with the number of blind people in receipt of Supported Living Payment who have employment of more than 15 hours a week. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review the 958 client files. As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

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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.

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 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.

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 or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Cassandra Wise
Manager, Service Delivery Issue Resolution