



10 AUG 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 9 July 2018 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many working age caregivers added a child aged under one to a main benefit in the year ending December 2018?*
- *How many working age caregivers added a child aged under one to a main benefit in the 6 months ending June 30, 2018?*
- *Please supply a breakdown of this data by ethnicity, age and gender.*
- *How many children dependent on a caregiver reliant on a main benefit at December 31, 2017 were born in 2017?*
- *How many children dependent on a caregiver reliant on a main benefit at December 31, 2016 were born in 2016?*
- *How many children dependent on a caregiver reliant on a main benefit at December 31, 2015 were born in 2015?*
- *How many sole parent support recipients added a subsequent child to their benefit in the years to 31 December 2012 to 2017?*

Please find enclosed Tables One to Three showing the number of clients in receipt of working age main benefit, at the end of December 2017 and June 2018, with a child born during the previous 12 months and 6 months respectively. This information is broken down by the client's age, gender and ethnicity. Please note that main benefits exclude New Zealand Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary Assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit.

It is important to note that ethnicity details recorded in the Ministry's systems have been gathered under a variety of classification schemes as clients came into contact with the Ministry. Ethnicity is self-identified, and reporting of ethnicity by clients is voluntary. A client may nominate multiple ethnicities as fits their preference or self-concept. However, when the Ministry reports on this data people are grouped by a single ethnicity based on standard Ministry practice. Ethnic groups do not currently align with Statistics New Zealand ethnicity groupings.

In order to protect client privacy some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

Table Four enclosed shows the number of children dependent on a caregiver who is in receipt of a main benefit as at 31 December 2015, 2016 and 2017, and were born in that same year. Please note that this is the number of children that have been included during each calendar year, and a client may have more than one child included in the reported periods.

The enclosed Table Five shows the number of working age people in receipt of Sole Parent Support as at the end of December 2013 to 2017, who added a subsequent child within the prior calendar year. The Ministry introduced the Subsequent Child Policy on 15 October 2012. The Policy relates to parents in receipt of a current benefit with an existing dependent child, who include a child born on or after 15 October 2012 in their benefit.

I am unable to provide you with this information for the 2012 calendar year as this information is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files to determine if a child included would be considered a subsequent child under this policy. As such I refuse your request for this information under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

Please note the attached tables only include point in time data, ie as at a certain date. To provide data that accounts for the individual changes in circumstances that may occur throughout the period you have requested, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of individual case files. As such I refuse your request for this information under section 18(f) of the Official Information 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.

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 and attachments 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 concerning beneficiaries with dependent children, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Wise', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Cassandra Wise  
**Team Manager Issue Resolution, Service Delivery**

**Table One: Total number of clients aged 18 to 64 in receipt of a main benefit as at end of December 2017 responsible for a child born in 2017, and as at the end of June 2018 responsible for a child born in 2018, broken down by ethnic group.**

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Number as at the end of December 2017</b>	<b>Number as at the end of June 2018</b>
Māori	4,990	2,752
Pacific Island	1,230	737
NZ European	2,191	1,298
Unspecified	412	266
Other	987	569
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,810</b>	<b>5,622</b>

**Table Two: Total number of clients aged 18 to 64 in receipt of a main benefit as at end of December 2017 responsible for a child born in 2017, and as at the end of June 2018 responsible for a child born in 2018, broken down by age group.**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number as at the end of December 2017</b>	<b>Number as at the end of June 2018</b>
18-19	644	333
20-24	3,179	1,999
25-29	2,791	1,604
30-34	1,712	953
35-39	899	432
40-44	387	193
45-49	101	60
50-54	51	30
55-59	26	S
60-64	20	S
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,810</b>	<b>5,622</b>

**Table Three: Total number of clients aged 18 to 64 in receipt of a main benefit as at end of December 2017 responsible for a child born in 2017, and as at the end of June 2018 responsible for a child born in 2018, broken down by gender.**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number as at the end of December 2017</b>	<b>Number as at the end of June 2018</b>
Male	1,317	848
Female	8,493	4,774
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,810</b>	<b>5,622</b>

**Table Four: Number of children dependent on a caregiver who is in receipt of a main benefit as at 31 December 2015, 2016 and 2017, and were born in that same year.**

<b>As at the end of December</b>	<b>Number of dependent children born in the calendar year</b>
2015	10,623
2016	10,256
2017	9,900

**Table Five: Number of working age people in receipt of Sole Parent Support as at the end of December 2013 to 2017, where a subsequent child has been added during the same calendar year.**

<b>As at the end of December</b>	<b>Number of clients</b>
2013	5,384
2014	4,968
2015	5,320
2016	6,111
2017	6,584