



[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

On 21 May 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many people received the Supported Living Payment in each of the following years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, currently in 2019?*
- *Five examples of health conditions which people on the Supported Living Payment might have.*
- *The number of beneficiaries on the Supported Living Payment who were given Work and Income loans for medical-related costs in each of the following years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and currently in 2019. This could be for equipment (e.g. glasses), costs (e.g. dental treatment), or otherwise.*
- *The cost of loans for medical-related equipment for those on the Supported Living Payment for each of those years.*
- *Five examples of what the loans were for.*
- *The number of beneficiaries on the Supported Living Payment who got a Disability Allowance in each of the following years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and currently in 2019.*
- *The number of beneficiaries on the Supported Living payment who got support with prescriptions and health practitioner costs in each of the following years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and currently in 2019.*
- *The number of beneficiaries on the Supported Living Payment who got a special needs grant in each of the following years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and currently in 2019.*
- *What other provisions are there for a beneficiary who needs medical equipment/treatment/etc which they cannot afford on their benefit?*

Supported Living Payment is a weekly payment to help people who have or are caring for someone with, a health condition, injury or disability. It is available to people who meet the eligibility requirements including people who are:

- permanently and severely restricted in their ability to work because of a health condition, injury or disability
- totally blind
- caring full-time for someone at home who would otherwise need hospital-level or residential care (or equivalent) who is not their husband, wife or partner.

Further information about Supported Living Payments, including eligibility requirements is available at: <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/supported-living-payment.html#null>

The Ministry publishes quarterly factsheets on the number of people receiving assistance. These factsheets include the number of people receiving a Supported Living Payment broken down by incapacity groups, and are available at: <http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/latest-quarterly-results/all-main-benefits.html>

Disability Allowance is an income tested, non-taxable form of additional financial assistance available to clients who have on-going additional costs because of a disability or medical condition, such as medical appointments, counselling, pharmaceutical costs, special foods, or travel. The Ministry pays up to a maximum of \$64.29 a week for a Disability Allowance.

For clients who have regular essential living costs that cannot be met from their chargeable income and other resources, Temporary Additional Support can be paid as a last resort to help clients cover these costs. If the costs are related to a health or disability costs, client's eligibility for Disability Allowance must be assessed and/or granted in the first instance before testing client's eligibility for Temporary Additional Support. More information about Temporary Additional Support can be found here: <http://workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/temporary-additional-support/introduction.html>

The Ministry of Health funds a range of Disability Support Services available to people who have a physical, intellectual or sensory disability (or a combination of these). The support available through the Ministry varies depending on the individual's specific health condition. More information about the types of support available can be found here: <http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/types-disability-support>

In addition, people receiving an income-tested benefit are eligible for a Community Services Card that enables them and their family to access subsidised health services. Community Services Cards are also available for low-income earners who meet the eligibility criteria. Information about eligibility for Community Services Cards can be found here: <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html#null>

Please find enclosed three tables containing the number of working age clients receiving Supported Living Payment Health Condition and Disability (SLP HC&D) in the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, whether receiving a Disability Allowance (DA) or DA costs (for medical costs or prescriptions charges), and incapacity group (as at end of March 2019).

You have also asked for the number of people receiving a Supported Living Payment who are receiving additional assistance for medical related costs, and in particular, "loans for medical-related requirement". The Ministry does not provide loans of this nature. Rather, assistance may be available to help people with the cost of medical-related equipment, prescriptions and health practitioner costs, in the form of an Advance Payment of benefit (an Advance), which are recoverable. The repayment rate for an Advance is set based on an individual's personal circumstances.

Further information about Advances can be found the following:
<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/advance-payment-of-benefit.html>.

You have also asked for the number of people receiving a Supported Living Payment who received a Special Needs Grant from 2015 to 2019. A Special Needs Grant is a one-off payment to help you pay an essential or emergency cost if you can't pay it another way. Further information about Special Needs Grants is available at:
<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html>

A two further tables enclosed, the first of which shows the number and value of advances and recoverable Special Needs Grants for medical related costs, broken down by year and the medical-related reason. The final table shows the number and value of Special Needs Grants approved for people in receipt of Supported Living Payment Health Condition and Disability each year from 2015 to 2019 (up to 31 March 2019). As people come on and off benefit during a period, it is not possible to report on the number of individuals receiving a specific benefit during a period. As such, these tables are the number of grants rather than distinct clients.

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.

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, Issues Resolution, Service Delivery

Table 1: Number of working age clients receiving Supported Living Payment Health Condition and Disability as at end the end of March each year 2015 to 2019.

Year ending March	Disability Allowance (DA) Yes/No		Total number of WA SLP HC&D
	Yes	No	
2015	51,793	28,849	80,642
2016	51,737	28,746	80,483
2017	51,611	28,877	80,488
2018	51,541	28,721	80,262
2019	51,443	29,195	80,638

Table 2: Number of working clients receiving Supported Living Payment Health Condition and Disability as at end March quarter 2019, broken down by incapacity group.

Incapacity group	Number of clients
Psychological or psychiatric conditions	29,757
Intellectual disability	9,140
Musculo-skeletal sys. disorder	7,891
Nervous system disorders	6,266
Cardio-vascular disorders	4,750
Congenital conditions	4,730
Accident	3,141
Respiratory disorders	2,489
Metabolic & endocrine disorders	2,167
Sensory disorders	2,021
Cancer	1,942
Substance abuse	1,439
Ill-defined conditions	1,320
Genito-urinary disorders	1,075
Digestive system disorders	965
Infectious/parasitic diseases	586
Blood and blood forming organs	471
Skin disorders	272
Immune system disorders	176
Designated Health Practitioner review, no med entitlement and Entry of foreign bodies and Unspecified	32
Pregnancy related	8
Total	80,638

Table 3: Number of working age clients receiving Supported Living Payment Health Condition and Disability and also receiving Disability Allowance (DA) with costs included for 'Prescription Charges' or 'Medical Costs' as at end of March years 2015 to 2019.

Year ending March	Number of clients receiving DA with costs included for 'prescription charges' or 'medical costs'
2015	50,534
2016	50,531
2017	50,395
2018	50,378
2019	50,222

Table 4: Number and amount of Advance Payment of Benefits and recoverable Special Needs Grants approved for 'medical related costs' for Supported Living Payment Health Condition and Disability clients during the calendar years 2015 to 2019 (to March 2019)

Medical related grant reason	Calendar year											
	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019 (to March)			
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount		
Dental Treatment	5,974	\$2,475,766	5,967	\$2,651,176	6,159	\$2,835,365	6,540	\$3,395,245	1,679	\$956,440		
Dentures	1,533	\$1,591,872	1,523	\$1,730,488	1,587	\$1,862,508	1,714	\$2,175,018	462	\$637,992		
Ambulance Subscription Fee and Health Travel Costs	123	\$7,055	129	\$6,905	134	\$7,856	138	\$7,860	37	\$2,107		
Hearing Aids	298	\$277,291	271	\$285,058	341	\$354,612	373	\$390,079	79	\$87,692		
Total	7,928	\$4,351,983	7,890	\$4,673,627	8,221	\$5,060,341	8,765	\$5,968,202	2,257	\$1,684,231		

Table 5: Number and amount of Special Needs Grants approved for Supported Living Payment Health Condition and Disability clients during the calendar years 2015 to 2019 (to March 2019)

Calendar year	Number of SNG grants approved	Total amount
2015	59,825	\$7,304,319
2016	64,390	\$8,894,528
2017	81,047	\$13,371,721
2018	97,995	\$15,419,954
2019 (up to March)	32,834	\$5,191,965