



7 OCT 2019

On 21 August 2019, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- 1. The number of youth payment applications in the past five years, broken down by the number of successful and unsuccessful applications each year*
- 2. The number of youth payment applications that were unsuccessful due to not meeting the "your relationship with your parents or guardians has broken down and no one can support you financially" criteria in the Parental Support Gap requirements.*
- 3. The number of youth payment applications that were unsuccessful due to not meeting the "there is a good reason why you can no longer live with your parents or guardian, or be supported by them or anyone else" criteria in the Parental Support Gap requirements*
- 4. The number of youth payment applications that included reference to LGBTIQ+ identity, broken down by successful and unsuccessful payments*
- 5. Any relevant records (emails, briefings, memos, case manager notes, etc) of cases where a young person has applied for a youth payment on the grounds of a parental support gap due to the young person's LGBTIQ+ identity*
- 6. Any relevant records (emails, briefings, memos, case manager notes, etc) of cases where a young person has unsuccessfully applied for a youth payment on the grounds of a parental support gap due to the young person's LGBTIQ+ identity, including reasoning as to why the application was denied.*

The Youth Service focuses on identifying and supporting some of New Zealand's most vulnerable young people into training and employment opportunities. Clients receiving a Youth Payment (YP) or a Young Parent Payment (YPP) are required to engage with a service provider or specialist case manager. In addition, they must also be enrolled in and undertake, or be available for, a full-time course of secondary or tertiary education, or approved training or work-based learning that will lead to NCEA level two qualification or an equivalent or higher qualification.

Young people who apply for YP or YPP are assessed on a case by case basis to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria for financial assistance. Youth Service providers deliver wrap around case management support to at-risk young people. This includes identifying and addressing the young person's needs, such as reasonable and affordable accommodation, and working with Work and Income to address them.

Further information about the Youth Service is available on the Work and Income website at the following link: <http://www.youthservice.govt.nz/>.

Your questions are answered in turn below:

1. *The number of youth payment applications in the past five years, broken down by the number of successful and unsuccessful applications each year.*

Please see below Table One showing the number of Youth Payment and Young Parent Payment applications for each of the last five financial years. This is broken down into granted and declined applications.

Financial Year	Decline		Grant		Total
	YP	YPP	YP	YPP	
2014/2015	1,855	362	2,544	1,087	5,848
2015/2016	1,852	362	2,367	960	5,541
2016/2017	1,917	412	2,151	1,274	5,754
2017/2018	1,704	590	2,125	1,548	5,967
2018/2019	1,644	502	1,959	1,309	5,414
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,972</b>	<b>2,228</b>	<b>11,146</b>	<b>6,178</b>	<b>28,524</b>

2. *The number of youth payment applications that were unsuccessful due to not meeting the "your relationship with your parents or guardians has broken down and no one can support you financially" criteria in the Parental Support Gap requirements.*
3. *The number of youth payment applications that were unsuccessful due to not meeting the "there is a good reason why you can no longer live with your parents or guardian, or be supported by them or anyone else" criteria in the Parental Support Gap requirements.*

To be eligible for YP or YPP young people must meet a range of criteria, including a parental support gap. A young person is considered to have a parental support gap when:

- each of their parents is unable to support them financially
- the relationship with their parents (or guardians) has broken down
- they are transitioning from care under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, via an extended care agreement, parenting order or guardianship order
- there is a good and sufficient reason (for example, safety concerns) why the young person cannot reasonably expect to be financially dependent on their parents or any other person.

A young person is not considered to have a parental support gap if they have the option of living with a parent or guardian but have chosen to leave.

If an applicant does not meet any of the parental support gap criteria, their application is declined. The decline is recorded in the Ministry's system under a single reason: 'Does not meet the service qualification'.

The following table shows the number of declined applications for YP or YPP based on the "Does Not Meet Service Qualification" reason over the financial years from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2019.

Reason	Payment Type	
	YP	YPP
Does Not Meet Service Qualification	2,794	261

To provide figures showing the specific decline reasons you requested, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of individual case files to identify the decline reason. 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.

4. *The number of youth payment applications that included reference to LGBTIQ+ identity, broken down by successful and unsuccessful payments.*
5. *Any relevant records (emails, briefings, memos, case manager notes, etc) of cases where a young person has applied for a youth payment on the grounds of a parental support gap due to the young person's LGBTIQ+ identity.*
6. *Any relevant records (emails, briefings, memos, case manager notes, etc) of cases where a young person has unsuccessfully applied for a youth payment on the grounds of a parental support gap due to the young person's LGBTIQ+ identity, including reasoning as to why the application was denied.*

The Ministry does not record LGBTIQ+ identity centrally and any information the Ministry may have recorded about a client's LGBTIQ+ identity would be held in notes on individual case files. As such, I am unable to provide you with the number of youth payment applications or relevant records, including emails, briefings, memos, or case manager notes that reference LGBTIQ+ identity. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of 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.

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 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 regarding Youth Payment applications, 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 blue ink, appearing to read 'Juanita Te Kani', written in a cursive style.

Juanita Te Kani  
**General Manager, Youth**