



03 AUG 2020

Dear

On 7 July 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding working-age Benefit recipients in Rotorua, Queenstown and Johnsonville.

The Ministry publishes Benefit Fact Sheets which provide a high-level view of trends in Benefit receipt. The Benefit Fact Sheets also provide breakdowns of overall numbers, where appropriate, by:

- Benefit sub-categories
- gender
- broad age groups
- ethnicity
- continuous duration on any Benefit
- presence of dependent children
- broad categories of incapacity.

The Benefit Fact Sheets are published every quarter. The most recent Benefit Fact Sheets for working-age recipients of Main Benefits can be accessed at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/index.html.

Your questions will be addressed in turn below.

- *The number of working-age benefits paid in Rotorua as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*
- *The number of working-age benefits paid in Queenstown-Lakes District as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*
- *The number of working-age benefits paid in Johnsonville as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*

Please see **Table One** overleaf, showing the number of working-age Main Benefit clients, broken down by service centre locations requested, as at the end of December 2015 to 2019 and June 2020.

You will note that there is a significant increase in the number of working-age Main Benefit clients in June 2020, particularly in Queenstown and Rotorua. This is likely to be due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting effects this has had on the tourism industry.

Table One: Number of working-age Main Benefit clients, broken down by service centre locations requested, as at the end of December 2015 to 2019 and end of June 2020.

Service Centre	December 2015	December 2016	December 2017	December 2018	December 2019	June 2020
Johnsonville	1,581	1,541	1,565	1,592	1,618	1,844
Queenstown	277	263	242	265	268	738
Rotorua	7,610	7,401	7,381	7,513	8,087	9,136
Total	9,468	9,205	9,188	9,370	9,973	11,718

Notes:

- This table shows the number of working-age (18-64 year old) Main Benefit clients.
- These are point in time numbers reflecting working-age Main Benefit clients as at the end of each calendar year and June 2020.
- Main Benefits exclude NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit.
- *The number of children living in benefit-dependent households in Rotorua as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*
- *The number of children living in benefit-dependent households in Queenstown-Lakes District as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*
- *The number of children living in benefit-dependent households in Johnsonville as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*

Please see **Table Two** below, showing the number of children included in working age clients' Main Benefits, broken down by service centre locations requested, as at the end of December 2015 to 2019 and June 2020.

Table Two: Number of children included in working-age clients' Main Benefits, broken down by service centre locations requested, as at the end of December 2015 to 2019 and June 2020.

Service Centre	December 2015	December 2016	December 2017	December 2018	December 2019	June 2020
Johnsonville	748	716	720	769	717	781
Queenstown	149	132	142	151	137	228
Rotorua	5,867	5,514	5,372	5,298	5,466	5,807
Total	6,764	6,362	6,234	6,218	6,320	6,816

Notes:

- This is a count of children linked to clients receiving a Main Benefit, this is not a count of clients.
- These are point in time numbers reflecting a count of children as at the end of each calendar year and June 2020.
- A client receiving a Benefit may have more than one child.
- All children linked to the client's Benefit are included, regardless of age of the child.
- Children who are financially independent of the Benefit recipient will not be linked to their Benefit, so will be excluded from this information.
- The Ministry defines a child as a single person under the age of 18 years old, other than a person who is 16/17 and financially independent.
- A child may also include a person who is 18 years old until the end of the calendar year in which they turn 18.

- *The proportion of Maori children living in benefit-dependent households in Rotorua as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*
- *The proportion of Maori children living in benefit-dependent households in Queenstown-Lakes District as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*
- *The proportion of Maori children living in benefit-dependent households in Johnsonville as at December for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and May 2020.*

I am refusing your request for this information under section 18(g)(i) of the Official Information Act. Unfortunately, we do not record information regarding the ethnicities of the children included in a client's Benefit, and we do not know of another agency that would hold it in the format requested, or whose functions would be more closely connected to it.

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. 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



PP Bridget Saunders
**Manager, Issue Resolution,
Service Delivery**