



28 AUG 2020

Tēnā koe

On 1 August 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (Act), the following information:

- *The number of people residing in the Porirua and Tawa basin who are receiving \$2 per week as reimbursement for the Prescription Subsidy Card.*
- *How many of those people provided evidence of payment of Prescription Co-payment in the last 2 years.*

As advised on 3 August 2020, information in relation to the Prescription Subsidy Card is held by the Ministry of Health (MOH). MOH will respond to this request.

On 4 August 2020, you clarified your request to be for the following information in relation to prescription costs:

- *How many Porirua and Tawa basin people needed this additional tax-payer funding currently compared to how many actually received it for the years 2017, 2018, and 2019.*

The Ministry has interpreted your request to be for information regarding clients who receive financial assistance for pharmaceutical charges as part of their Disability Allowance (DA).

The DA can be used to cover the costs of regular, ongoing pharmaceutical charges that a person has incurred because of their disability or health condition. The DA also includes the 'government prescription charge' on prescription items that are subsidised by the Government.

The DA can only be paid for the portion of costs that is not covered by the Community Services Card, High Use Health Card, Pharmaceutical Subsidy Card, or medical insurance, ACC or other accident insurers.

The amount paid is estimated in relation to the actual costs that have been or will be incurred on a regular basis up to the current maximum weekly rate of \$65.36. If a client is claiming assistance for pharmaceutical charges, their DA payment may increase based on the sum of these additional costs.

To include pharmaceutical charges as a cost for DA, the client must provide receipts as proof of their actual ongoing costs. You can find more information about the process for obtaining proof of pharmaceutical costs on the Work and Income website here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/disability-allowance/proof-of-pharmaceutical-costs-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/disability-allowance/proof-of-pharmaceutical-costs-01.html).

Further information about pharmaceutical charges and pharmaceutical subsidies can be found on the following two pages located on the Work and Income website:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/disability-allowance/pharmaceutical-charges-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/disability-allowance/pharmaceutical-charges-01.html)
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/disability-allowance/pharmaceutical-subsidies-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/disability-allowance/pharmaceutical-subsidies-01.html)

To meet the intent of your request, please see table below which shows the number of people in the Porirua Service Centre receiving the DA and the total number of DA recipients receiving support for pharmaceutical charges as part of their DA as at the end of each financial year from June 2017 to June 2020.

<b>Financial year ending</b>	<b>Number of DA clients</b>	<b>Number DA clients receiving support for pharmaceutical charges</b>
June 2017	3,247	2,625
June 2018	3,196	2,526
June 2019	3,128	2,464
June 2020	3,103	2,425

**Notes:**

- DA can be paid to a client or on behalf of a dependent.
- A client may be receiving a DA for themselves, their partner or a dependent child, in which case they are counted more than once.

Please note that the Ministry is unable to provide a breakdown of the number of people who reside in Tawa receiving prescription costs as part of their DA, as there are no Service Centres located in Tawa. While it is highly likely that majority of Tawa residents would be based at the Porirua Service Centre, the Ministry is unable to confirm these details as it 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.

As such, I refuse this aspect of 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 this aspect of 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.

Should you wish to request information about clients who reside in Johnsonville receiving prescription costs as part of their DA, please contact us and we will process this as a new request.

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding clients who receive financial assistance for pharmaceutical charges as part of their DA in the Porirua Service Centre, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



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