




**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

19 JUN 2020



Tēnā koe 

On 25 May 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of people on each of the various benefits, going back as far as possible.*

On 25 May 2020, further clarification of your request was sought. During your phone conversation with the advisor, your request was refined to the following information:

- *Number of people in receipt of a benefit from 2000 (or further back if possible) to 2011, broken down by benefit type.*

You were subsequently sent an email which provided a link to the Ministry's website showing a list of reports containing statistical information that may be of value to you for the purposes of researching how people interact with the service lines of the Ministry. The reports also provide historical summaries of the administration of benefits and other support services that go as far back as 1940, including significant changes in policy over the years.

On 8 June 2020, you indicated that the information did not answer your request and advised that the *number of people in receipt of the Unemployment Benefit would suffice.*

As your original request was for information going back as far as possible, to meet the intent of your request, the Ministry is able to provide you with data from June 1996 to December 2011. This is broken down by the benefit types that preceded Jobseeker Support, which was introduced in the 2013 Welfare Reform by the Government of the time. Changes to the welfare system included replacing several main benefits with three new benefit categories: Jobseeker Support, Supported Living Payment, and Sole Parent Support.

More information about the range of welfare reforms can be found on the Ministry's website available at: [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/regulatory-impact-statements/welfare-reform-phase-one.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/regulatory-impact-statements/welfare-reform-phase-one.html).

Please be advised that the Ministry is unable to provide a monthly breakdown as this information is outside the Ministry's standard reporting. The Ministry is however able to provide you with quarterly figures.

Please find enclosed **Table One** which shows the number of working age Unemployment Benefit recipients as at the end of each quarter from June 1996 to December 2011.

You may be interested to know that the Ministry has developed a Social Assistance Chronology which provides a historical list of policy changes to the social security system as well as the changes over time to benefits, war pensions, retirement pensions, taxations measures, family assistance, child welfare, housing, student support and labour market programmes, covering the period from 1844 to 2019. You can access this information on the Ministry's website here: [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/about-msd/history/social-assistance-chronology-programme-history.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/about-msd/history/social-assistance-chronology-programme-history.html).

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 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 regarding the number of Unemployment Benefit recipients, 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.

Nāku noa, nā



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

**Table One: Number of working age Unemployment Benefit (UB) recipients as at the end of each quarter from June 1996 to December 2011**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Quarter end</b>	<b>UB related</b>
1996	June	120,879
	September	126,077
	December	137,789
1997	March	122,932
	June	126,808
	September	128,860
	December	144,055
1998	March	135,116
	June	138,855
	September	144,641
	December	159,348
1999	March	143,786
	June	148,575
	September	146,722
	December	158,619
2000	March	137,833
	June	139,042
	September	135,577
	December	144,072
2001	March	126,172
	June	124,561
	September	122,281
	December	131,200
2002	March	112,528
	June	111,990
	September	109,962
	December	115,894
2003	March	99,073
	June	97,485
	September	92,935
	December	92,789
2004	March	74,026
	June	67,817
	September	65,041
	December	65,210
2005	March	54,402
	June	50,037
	September	49,535
	December	50,702
2006	March	44,030
	June	39,241

<b>Year</b>	<b>Quarter end</b>	<b>UB related</b>
	September	40,675
	December	38,420
2007	March	28,569
	June	22,934
	September	23,010
	December	22,610
2008	March	18,949
	June	17,655
	September	23,211
	December	30,344
2009	March	36,860
	June	50,380
	September	60,051
	December	65,694
2010	March	59,632
	June	61,507
	September	64,649
	December	66,436
2011	March	59,343
	June	55,711
	September	55,150
	December	59,483

**Notes:**

- The table includes working age only (18 to 64 years).
- The Unemployment Benefit is now known as Jobseeker Support and was implemented during the Welfare Reform change on 15 July 2013.
- UB related is Unemployment Benefit and Unemployment Benefit Hardship.