



30 SEP 2020

Tēnā koe

On 3 September 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The number of people over 65 years old receiving the Community Services Card in NZ, Auckland, Northland, Waikato, Coromandel & Taranaki*
- *The number of people over 65 years old receiving hardship grants broken down by the type of grants in NZ, Auckland, Northland, Waikato, Coromandel & Taranaki*
- *The number of people over 65 years old receiving the accommodation supplement in NZ, Auckland, Northland, Waikato, Coromandel & Taranaki.*

The Community Services Card (CSC) is available to New Zealanders over the age of 16 on a low to middle income that meet the eligibility criteria. The card can be used to reduce the costs of a range of fees associated with healthcare, and is administered on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

Recipients of New Zealand Superannuation must meet an income test to qualify for a CSC unless they receive the Accommodation Supplement or are tenants of social housing. The CSC can be combined with a client's SuperGold Card if they qualify for both cards. For more information about the CSC, please see the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html.

Please find **Table One** and **Table Two** below and overleaf, showing the number of CSC holders aged 65 and over as at 30 June 2020, nationally (**Table One**) and broken down by the regions you have requested (**Table Two**). Please note that data for the Coromandel is included in the Waikato Regional Council area.

Table One: Number of CSC holders nationally, aged 65 and over as at 30 June 2020

As at Quarter Ending	Number of CSC holders
June 2020	316,648

Table Two: Number of CSC holders, aged 65 and over as at 30 June 2020, broken down by region

Regional Council	Number of CSC holders
Northland	15,477
Auckland	79,510
Waikato	31,053
Taranaki	9,668

Notes for Table One and Table Two:

- This data is measured at a point in time

The Ministry provides recoverable and non-recoverable financial assistance to help people meet an immediate need for essential items or services, such as food, health costs, power and other costs. Hardship payments are generally paid to clients as Advance Payments of Benefit (Advances), Recoverable Assistance Payments (RAPs), or as Special Needs Grants (SNGs).

Advances and RAPs provide interest free loans to help them meet an immediate need for essential items or services. SNGs provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to clients to meet immediate or emergency needs. The Ministry grants this assistance to eligible people who meet an income and asset test, and who are not able to meet this cost from their own resources or other sources. A client does not need to be a beneficiary to receive these payments.

The Ministry assists people to manage their costs in the longer term, not just with immediate and urgent assistance. It is important to understand why the client cannot meet these costs to provide the most appropriate form of assistance including helping them find other avenues of assistance such as from their District Health Board. The applicant also has an obligation to manage their own finances with the help of the Ministry. This may include seeking financial advice from budgeting services.

Further information about financial assistance and eligibility can be found at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/index.html.

Please find **Table Three** and **Table Four** below and overleaf, showing the number of hardship grants granted to clients aged 65 and older, broken down by the type of grant, nationally (**Table Three**), and by the regions you have requested (**Table Four**). Please note that data for the Coromandel is included in the Waikato Regional Council area.

Table Three: Number of hardship grants granted to clients aged 65 and older, broken down by the type of grant, nationally, for the quarter ending 30 June 2020

Quarter Ending	SNG	ADV	RAP
June 2020	18,119	8,189	21

Table Four: Number of hardship grants granted to clients aged 65 and older, broken down by the type of grant and region for the quarter ending 30 June 2020

Regional Council	SNG	ADV	RAP
Northland	1,234	515	0
Auckland	6,201	2,850	12
Waikato	1,764	931	S
Taranaki	398	237	0

Notes for Table Three and Table Four:

- This is a count of grants, not individuals. A client may have more than one grant in the period
- SNG is a Special Needs Grant
- ADV is an Advance Payment of Benefit
- RAP is a Recoverable Assistance Payment
- In certain circumstances, low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified. Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'. This information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act

The Accommodation Supplement is a non-taxable benefit which provides financial assistance towards accommodation costs. It is available for people who rent, board or own their own home. A person does not have to be receiving a benefit to be assessed to qualify for an Accommodation Supplement. It is calculated using a formula that takes into account geographical location, family size, accommodation costs, income and accommodation type.

Please find **Table Five** and **Table Six** below, showing the number of clients aged 65 and over receiving the Accommodation Supplement as at quarter ending June 2020, nationally (**Table Five**) and by the regions you have requested (**Table Six**).

Table Five: Number of clients aged 65 and over receiving the Accommodation Supplement nationally as at 30 June 2020

As at Quarter Ending	Number of Accommodation Supplement recipients
June 2020	47,851

Table Six: Number of clients aged 65 and over receiving the Accommodation Supplement as at 30 June 2020, broken down by region

Regional Council	Number of Accommodation Supplement recipients
Northland	2,283
Auckland	17,071
Waikato	4,990
Taranaki	1,176

Notes for Table Five and Table Six:

- This data is measured at a point in time

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 regarding statistics for the Community Services Card, Hardship Grants and Accommodation Supplements, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



Bridget Saunders
Manager
Issue Resolution