



4 AUG 2021

Tēnā koe

On 7 July 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *How many people receiving benefits live in Limited Employment Locations (could this please be organised into location and benefit type)*
2. *How have those numbers (above) changed over the past 10 years (broken down into year group)*
3. *How many times has MSD declined benefit applications to applicants who live in Limited Employment Locations*
4. *How many times has MSD cancelled benefits of clients living in Limited Employment Locations*
5. *Copies of any briefings/reports/reviews regarding Limited Employment Location which have been completed in the past five years*
6. *How often are Limited Employment Locations mentioned or quoted in MSD conversations with clients*
7. *Have the Limited Employment Locations changed over the past 10 years – if so, how*

For the sake of clarity your questions will be answered in order.

1. *How many people receiving benefits live in Limited Employment Locations (could this please be organised into location and benefit type)*
2. *How have those numbers (above) changed over the past 10 years (broken down into year group)*

On 23 July 2021, the Ministry contacted you to discuss the refinement of your first question regarding those receiving benefits living in limited employment locations. The Ministry suggested that when the data for this was broken down by both limited employment locations and benefit type, much of the data would need to be suppressed to protect the privacy of Ministry clients. You confirmed that you would rather the data be suppressed in this manner than to refine the request to ask for different data.

A limited employment location is defined as a place with the following characteristics:

- severely limited availability of work,

- local labour market at a low level - therefore having limited job opportunities (if an area has seasonal work available in the coming year, the area is not considered a limited employment location), and
- lack of public transport to take commuters to an area where work is available.

A client's residential address is used to decide whether they live in a limited employment location.

A client who is living in a limited employment location and receiving Jobseeker Support through their local Service Centre must continue to meet the work obligations. These include being available for, and taking reasonable steps to obtain, suitable employment.

Assistance to transition into employment may be available to help clients who are living in a limited employment location, with the essential costs of attending a job interview or taking up paid employment. More information is available here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/assistance-to-transition-into-employment-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/employment-and-work-readiness-assistance/assistance-to-transition-into-employment-01.html).

In 2016, the Ministry changed its data collection to include 'area units'. These area units are locations on the scale of limited employment locations. While some limited employment location data was recorded through 'city' or 'suburb' scale information, the majority the Ministry's data is recorded in area units. As these were only introduced in 2016, we are unable to report data prior to this in this response.

Please find **Table One** and **Table Two** attached to this response. **Table One** shows the number of working age clients currently on main benefits residing in limited employment locations as at the end of June for 2016 to 2021, broken down by region and by benefit group. **Table Two** shows the number of working age clients current on main benefits residing in limited employment locations as at June for 2016 to 2021, broken down by region and location.

3. *How many times has MSD declined benefit applications to applicants who live in Limited Employment Locations*
4. *How many times has MSD cancelled benefits of clients living in Limited Employment Locations*

Please find **Table Three** attached to this response, which shows the grants, declines, and cancellations of working age clients on main benefits in limited employment locations during the financial years 2016 to 2021, broken down by financial year.

5. *Copies of any briefings/reports/reviews regarding Limited Employment Location which have been completed in the past five years*

The Ministry can confirm that there have been no briefings, reports, or reviews regarding limited employment locations completed in the past five years. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

6. *How often are Limited Employment Locations mentioned or quoted in MSD conversations with clients*

This information requested is held on individual client files and is not centrally recorded. This means that substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all documents within scope of your request. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the 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.

7. *Have the Limited Employment Locations changed over the past 10 years – if so, how*

The Ministry can confirm that the locations of limited employment locations have not changed in the last ten years.

The principles and purposes of the Act 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
- 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 Limited Employment Locations, 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

  
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Service Delivery**