



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

17 AUG 2021

Tēnā koe

On 20 July 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information regarding the national level benefit data tables available on the Ministry's website:

- *access that same data ... for the years 2008 to 2014*

A sanction is issued on a benefit when a client has not fulfilled their work-related obligations (i.e. to look for or find work). Sanctions can affect benefit recipients in a number of ways depending on their circumstances and the number of times they have had a sanction issued over the last 12 months. There are three types of sanctions: graduated (i.e. percentage reduction in benefit amount), suspended and cancelled. Not everyone who does not meet their commitments get sanctioned. A sanction can be withdrawn when a client re-complies or provides additional information.

The Ministry publishes benefit sanction information online and retains an archive which provides information backdated to 2014. Please see **Table One** in **Appendix A**, which provides the number of sanctions imposed on Working Age Main Benefits from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013 broken down by quarter and sanction type.

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
- 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.

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If you are not satisfied with this response regarding benefit sanction data from 2008 to 2014, 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
Service Delivery

Appendix A

Table One: The number of sanctions imposed on Working Age Main Benefits from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013 broken down by quarter and sanction type.

Quarter	Sanction Type		
	Graduated / Rate Reduction	Suspended/Cancelled	Total
March 2008	105	4,914	5,019
June 2008	228	6,867	7,095
September 2008	126	6,345	6,468
December 2008	102	6,351	6,453
March 2009	75	6,975	7,050
June 2009	111	9,015	9,129
September 2009	138	10,242	10,380
December 2009	132	10,071	10,206
March 2010	126	10,449	10,575
June 2010	150	11,976	12,129
September 2010	459	10,218	10,680
December 2010	8,571	4,305	12,879
March 2011	8,682	3,636	12,321
June 2011	11,808	5,070	16,878
September 2011	10,401	4,788	15,192
December 2011	9,243	4,245	13,491
March 2012	9,111	4,014	13,128
June 2012	10,560	4,338	14,898
September 2012	10,503	4,323	14,829
December 2012	9,579	3,930	13,506
March 2013	10,656	4,059	14,715
June 2013	11,244	4,566	15,810
September 2013	9,723	4,287	14,010
December 2013	11,808	4,053	15,864

Notes:

- Working Age is 18 to 64 years of age
- Main Benefits excludes New Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-beneficiary, Orphans benefit and Unsupported Child benefit.
- The increase in graduated sanctions from 2010/11 is due to the introduction of Future Focus changes from 27 September 2010
- This is a count of Sanctions not clients and the same client may have been sanctioned more than once.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- A value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.

- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.