



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Tēnā koe

On 27 July 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. The number of hardship assistance payments made - such as Special Needs Grant, Advance Payment of Benefit, Recoverable Assistance payment - made to people aged 65 years and over broken down by district for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021.*
- 2. Also, can I please request the breakdown of hardship reasons and the number of grants allocated to them for Northland alone for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021.*
- 3. Are you able to provide a table of Emergency Benefit clients aged 65 years and over, broken down by district, for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021.*

On 10 August 2021, the third question of your request was refined to provide a table broken down by region, instead of by district.

The Ministry offers several main benefits to people who need financial support and fit the eligibility criteria. The type of main benefit a person may receive is dependent on their circumstances. Information about the types of benefits available and what type of benefit is suitable to a person's circumstance is available on the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/index.html.

New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) provides a retirement income for clients who have reached 65 years of age, which is paid fortnightly. More information around New Zealand Superannuation can be found at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/seniors/superannuation/index.html.

Work and Income, a service line of the Ministry, provides hardship assistance to help people pay for essential items or services they need urgently. Different types of assistance are available that can be either recoverable or non-recoverable, and deciding which product is most appropriate is determined by the person's need and individual circumstances.

The Emergency Benefit is only available for clients that are not eligible for another benefit, such as NZS. The Emergency Benefit helps support those over the age of 65 that are ineligible for NZS due to not meeting the residency requirements.

Please note that the year 2020 saw a significant increase in demand for Government assistance as the Ministry has supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period. This should be taken into account when comparing it with data from previous quarters.

Please find **Appendix One** attached, which includes the following tables:

- **Table One:** Number of hardship grants paid to clients aged 65 and over during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 July 2021, broken down by Territorial Local Authority (TLA) and calendar year.
- **Table Two:** Number of hardship grants paid to clients aged 65 and over in Northland during the period 1 January 2019 to July 2021, broken down by hardship group reason and calendar year.
- **Table Three:** Number of Emergency Benefit clients aged 65 and over, as at end of the quarter 2019 to 2021, broken down by region and quarter end.

Notes for all tables:

- Table 1 and Table 2 are number of hardship grants, not the number of clients.
- Clients can be counted more than once if they had multiple hardship grants in a period.
- The calendar year 2021 includes data from 1 January to 31 July.
- Hardship grants include Advances of Main Benefit, Special Needs Grants and Recoverable Assistance Payments.
- TLA is estimated based on the client's address at the time of the grant.
- Ungeocoded address records that are unable to be matched to a TLA through suburb and city details have an unknown TLA.
- The TLAs included in Northland in Table 2 include Far North District, Kaipara District and Whangārei District.
- Table 3 is based on MSD region, not TLA.
- The MSD region 'Other' represents those service centres that do not represent a geographic location such as call centres and processing units.
- To protect confidentiality, the Ministry 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.

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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding hardship assistance for people over the age of 65, 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.

Yours sincerely

Bridget Saunders

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

Appendix One.

Table One: Number of hardship grants paid to clients aged 65 and over during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 July 2021, broken down by Territorial Local Authority (TLA) and calendar year.

TLA	Calendar year		
	2019	2020	2021
Ashburton District	333	348	255
Auckland Super City	32,691	36,246	21,186
Buller District	267	363	210
Carterton District	198	189	96
Central Hawke's Bay District	210	348	261
Central Otago District	123	132	75
Christchurch City	5,037	5,793	3,675
Clutha District	159	171	90
Dunedin City	1,479	1,452	987
Far North District	3,753	4,140	2,487
Gisborne District	1,590	2,010	1,245
Gore District	234	204	138
Grey District	255	336	255
Hamilton City	3,789	4,164	2,649
Hastings District	1,644	2,331	1,383
Hauraki District	348	459	288
Horowhenua District	1,287	1,587	984
Hurunui District	99	126	75
Invercargill City	699	921	546
Kaikoura District	36	48	45
Kaipara District	531	699	402
Kapiti Coast District	1,017	1,086	654
Kawerau District	300	360	258
Lower Hutt City	2,622	2,889	1,779
Mackenzie District	12	15	12
Manawatu District	408	396	285
Marlborough District	651	663	477
Masterton District	918	849	555
Matamata-Piako District	459	525	342
Napier City	1,290	1,731	1,083
Nelson City	708	693	441
New Plymouth District	1,431	1,380	912
Opotiki District	303	408	249
Otorohanga District	105	153	105
Palmerston North City	1,191	1,578	996
Porirua City	2,115	2,022	1,155
Queenstown-Lakes District	24	42	42
Rangitikei District	441	516	312
Rotorua District	2,022	2,394	1,584
Ruapehu District	495	615	378
Selwyn District	180	249	135
South Taranaki District	552	675	441
South Waikato District	816	870	588
South Wairarapa District	216	198	117
Southland District	135	129	99
Stratford District	234	273	150
Tararua District	486	621	417
Tasman District	537	579	399
Taupo District	747	930	525
Tauranga City	1,650	1,932	1,182
Thames-Coromandel District	456	552	312
Timaru District	402	432	222
Upper Hutt City	612	831	504
Waikato District	1,929	1,830	1,125
Waimakariri District	528	555	369
Waimate District	147	132	78
Waipa District	711	756	549
Wairoa District	486	477	333
Waitaki District	435	345	246
Waitomo District	246	288	195
Wellington City	2,256	2,205	1,578

TLA	Calendar year		
	2019	2020	2021
Western Bay of Plenty District	651	738	432
Westland District	114	168	87
Whakatane District	804	984	633
Whanganui District	1,695	1,896	1,134
Whangarei District	2,358	2,871	1,830
Unknown/Other	183	216	102
Total	90,843	102,111	62,730

Table Two: Number of hardship grants paid to clients aged 65 and over in Northland during the period 1 January 2019 to July 2021, broken down by hardship group reason and calendar year.

Hardship group reason	Calendar year		
	2019	2020	2021
Accommodation	312	213	144
Driver Licence	3	0	3
Electricity	141	192	87
Health related	27	15	21
Medical and associated costs	1,143	936	726
Re-establishment grants	9	12	3
School costs	21	15	15
Emergency Housing Grant	78	120	78
Food	2,202	3,306	1,656
Other	2,706	2,904	1,989
Total	6,642	7,713	4,722

Table Three: Number of Emergency Benefit clients aged 65 and over, as at end of the quarter 2019 to 2021, broken down by region and quarter end.

MSD region	As at end of									
	March 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021	June 2021
Auckland Metro	2,364	2,316	2,313	2,262	2,343	2,412	2,448	2,424	2,430	2,463
Bay of Plenty	63	66	66	57	57	69	63	60	51	54
Canterbury	153	159	168	180	189	201	198	207	225	228
Central	60	57	57	66	60	69	69	66	78	81
East Coast	27	24	24	27	30	30	30	27	27	27
Nelson	30	30	30	33	27	30	33	33	33	33
Northland	18	18	15	18	18	21	24	18	18	21
Southern	36	33	24	27	30	30	30	27	30	33
Taranaki	21	21	18	21	27	24	21	24	27	30
Waikato	162	165	165	165	168	177	183	180	198	198
Wellington	303	315	321	309	318	327	327	330	330	333
Other	36	33	27	27	33	30	27	27	36	48
Total	3,270	3,237	3,234	3,195	3,300	3,414	3,450	3,432	3,480	3,549