



07 JUL 2021

Tēnā koe

On 9 June 2021, 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 on a benefit in Shannon and Horowhenua District over the last five years?*
- *Broken down to JobSeeker, Superannuation, Sickness and Student Allowance.*

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 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.

Veteran's Pension provides retirement income for New Zealand veterans who have recognised service and who have reached the qualifying age for New Zealand Superannuation. More information around the Veteran's Pension can be found at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/seniors/veterans/index.html.

Sole Parent Support is a weekly payment that helps single parents find part-time work or get ready for future work. More information around Sole Parent Support can be found at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/sole-parent-support.html.

The Emergency Maintenance Allowance is assistance that may be paid to sole parents who do not qualify for any other payments.

Orphan's Benefit (OB) provides income support to the caregiver of a child or young person whose parents have died or cannot be found, or cannot look after them because they have a long term illness or incapacity. Further information about the Orphan's Benefit is available on Work and Income's website at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/orphans-benefit.html.

Unsupported Child's Benefit provides income support to the caregiver of a child or young person whose parents are unable to care for or support them. Further information about the Unsupported Child's Benefit is available on Work and Income's website at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/unsupported-childs-benefit.html.

Supported Living Payment is a weekly payment to assist clients who have, or are caring for, someone with a health condition, injury or disability. More information around the Supported Living Payment can be found at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/supported-living-payment.html.

Emergency Benefit is an income and asset tested benefit payable to people who are in hardship, are unable to earn enough income for themselves (and any dependent family) and cannot receive another benefit. More information around the Emergency Benefit can be found at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/emergency-benefit.html.

Jobseeker Support is a temporary benefit paid for up to 52 weeks while clients look for work, are in training for work or unable to work due to a health condition, injury or disability. More information around the Jobseeker Support can be found at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/jobseeker-support.html#null.

Youth Payment helps young people aged 16 or 17 who cannot live with their parents or guardian and are not supported by them or anyone else. More information around the Youth Payment can be found at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/youth-payment.html.

Young Parent Payment helps young parents aged 16-19-year olds. More information around the Young Parent Payment can be found at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/young-parent-payment.html.

Your request for information regarding clients receiving a main benefit in the Horowhenua District is refused under section 18(d) of the Act on the basis that the information requested is publicly available.

This information can be found under Benefit Fact Sheets releases on the Ministry's website at the following link:

www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications/resources/statistics/benefit/index.html.

Regarding your request for the number of clients in receipt of Student Allowance in the Horowhenua District, I can advise that Ministry reporting does not centrally record the district of residence for recipients of Student Allowance, and they are not associated with a local Service Centre. Therefore, to reliably identify every client in receipt of Student Allowance within the Horowhenua District, the Ministry would need to manually review individual client files and confirm whether their address was within the district. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act due the substantial manual collation required. 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.

However, the Ministry can provide you with the requested information regarding clients whose addresses are Shannon based.

Please refer to **Table One** below, which shows the number of clients receiving a working age main benefit with a current Shannon address, as at the end of March, from 2017 to 2021.

Please refer to **Table Two** below, which shows the number of clients receiving the Student Allowance with a Shannon based study address, broken down by year from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2020.

Please note the Ministry's standard reporting for main benefits is by quarter end, whilst Student Allowance data is reported on by calendar year. Therefore, the data is provided in two separate tables.

Table One: The number of clients receiving a working age main benefit with a current Shannon address, as at the end of March, from 2017 to 2021.

| Month ending | Benefit Type | | | | | | | | | Total |
|--------------|--------------|-----|--------|-----|-----|----|-----|---------|--------|------------|
| | NZS /VP | EMA | OB UCB | SPS | SLP | EB | JS | Non-Ben | YP/YPP | |
| March 2017 | 243 | 0 | 12 | 57 | 84 | 0 | 108 | 15 | 3 | 525 |
| March 2018 | 240 | 0 | 12 | 36 | 90 | 3 | 102 | 21 | 3 | 507 |
| March 2019 | 246 | 0 | 15 | 33 | 81 | 0 | 111 | 18 | 3 | 510 |
| March 2020 | 255 | 0 | 15 | 36 | 81 | 3 | 114 | 21 | 6 | 525 |
| March 2021 | 258 | 0 | 15 | 36 | 75 | 0 | 126 | 24 | 3 | 534 |

Notes for Table One:

- NZS/ VP is NZ Superannuation and Veteran's Pension.
- EMA is Emergency Maintenance Allowance.
- OB UCB is Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit.
- SPS is Sole Parent Support.
- SLP is Supported Living Payment.
- EB is Emergency Benefit.
- JS is Jobseeker Support.
- Non-Ben is non-beneficiary assistance.
- YP/YPP is Youth Payment and Young Parent Payment.
- This data is based upon the word Shannon being entered as the client's city and is only an estimate.
- 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.

Table Two: The number of clients receiving the Student Allowance with a Shannon based study address, broken down by calendar year from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2020.

| Year | Total |
|------|-----------|
| 2016 | 15 |
| 2017 | 12 |
| 2018 | 27 |
| 2019 | 24 |
| 2020 | 33 |

Notes for Table Two:

- Address is the address held for student at end of last month they were paid in.
- To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- This data has had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- 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 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 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 benefit information in Shannon and Horowhenua District, 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



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