



05 MAY 2021

Dear

On 21 April 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry) Media Team requesting information on the number of grants/loans to cover emergency or essential payments.

On 22 April 2021, the Media Team passed on your query to the Official Parliamentary and Information team to respond. The Ministry will now be responding to your request, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), for the following information:

- *How much these grants are worth please on average and how much has been paid out in the last five years in total.*

All clients receiving a main benefit, Orphans Benefit, Unsupported Childs Benefit, New Zealand Superannuation or Veteran's Pension who need assistance to meet a particular immediate need for an essential item or service, may get an advance of up to 6 weeks of their benefit. This is called an Advance Payment of Benefit (Advance).

Consideration must be given to whether an Advance would best meet their immediate need. The Ministry must investigate other sources of assistance to meet the immediate need and consider the client's ability to repay the Advance. This includes when an essential need is provided under the Advance Payment of Benefit categories. You can find more information on the Advance Benefit Payment on the Ministry's website here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/advance-payment-of-benefit.html#null](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/advance-payment-of-benefit.html#null).

Information on the number of advances granted and the amount granted since quarter ending March 2016, is publicly available on the Ministry's website at the following link: [www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/2021/quarterly-benefit-fact-sheets-national-benefit-tables-march-2021.xlsx](http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/2021/quarterly-benefit-fact-sheets-national-benefit-tables-march-2021.xlsx).

As such, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, on the basis that the information you have requested is already publicly available.

Please note that all information in the Benefit Fact Sheets and supporting material has been randomly rounded to base 3. The information has been rounded independently resulting in small differences in numbers between products.

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the Advance Payment Benefit, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KS', followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to a point on the right.

Kate Satterthwaite  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**