



19 November 2021

Tēnā koe

On 2 October 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *The amount of flexi wage government funding allocated to this program*
2. *The total number of successful applicants.*
3. *The return on. Investment of these investments.*
4. *The current funding still available and unutilised.*
5. *The unemployment rate in New Zealand, and*
6. *The number of individuals and families currently receiving winz subsidy. These people are my target market as a demographic of low socioeconomic people, who will be most in need of genuine assistance, holistic health and optimal nutrition.*

Flexi-wage provides a wage subsidy and extra assistance to support employers to take on people who do not meet the entry level requirements of the job. This helps people get the employment skills and experience they need to get into and stay in unsubsidised employment.

You can find more information regarding the Flexi-wage at the following link:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/flexi-wage-subsidy/introduction.html.

Flexi-wage Self-Employment supports people wanting to establish their own business. There are criteria that must be met to be eligible for support. More information about Flexi-wage Self-Employment can be found here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/flexi-wage-self-employment.html

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will address your questions in turn:

1. *The amount of flexi wage government funding allocated to this program*

To support the Flexi-wage expansion that started on 15 February 2021, the Government invested an additional \$300 million into Flexi-wage. Of this, \$30 million has been ringfenced to support eligible people to start a new business through Flexi-wage Self-Employment.

2. The total number of successful applicants.

The Flexi-wage expansion started on 15 February 2021. As at 30 September 2021, 7,920 placements have been supported by the Flexi-wage. 318 of these placements have been into self-employment. For the same period in 2019, prior to COVID-19, there were 4,113 placements of which 84 were into self-employment.

3. The return on. Investment of these investments.

The Ministry has not completed a Cost Benefit Analysis, so cannot provide a return on investment value for Flexi-wage programmes. As such, this part of your request has been refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

4. The current funding still available and unutilised.

Approximately \$70 million has been committed as at 30 September 2021. Of this, approximately \$7 million is for Flexi-wage Self-Employment.

5. The unemployment rate in New Zealand

You can find the unemployment rate in New Zealand at the Stats NZ website, at the following link: www.stats.govt.nz/indicators/unemployment-rate.

As such, this part of your request has been refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information request is publicly available.

6. The number of individuals and families currently receiving winz subsidy. These people are my target market as a demographic of low socioeconomic people, who will be most in need of genuine assistance, holistic health and optimal nutrition.

You can find the number of people currently receiving financial support from the Ministry, at the following link:

www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/2021/benefit-fact-sheets-snapshot-september-2021.pdf.

As such, this part of your request has been refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information request is publicly available.

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 and any attached documents

available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments 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 the Flexi-wage, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Coleman', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Shaun Coleman
Director Employment
Product Manager