



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Dear

On 25 August 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The statistics for the number of declined applications for benefits, by decline reason (using the decline drop-down menu in the Ministry's IT system), from 2017 to 2021.*
 - *These stats should ideally show how many times each of the drop-down decline options have been used, by year and/or quarter.*
 - *The categories of benefits are as follows: main benefits, supplementary assistance, hardship assistance, and childcare support*
 - *Please include a breakdown by demographic where possible, e.g. age, ethnicity, gender.*

You provided the Ministry with a previous response made under the Act, sent by the Ministry on 3 June 2021, which lists options available to Ministry staff to decline applications for assistance. The Ministry has reviewed the information provided in the response sent on 3 June 2021 and concluded that it was incomplete as it was collated from a limited list of decline reasons in the Ministry's IT system.

The Ministry has now collated the complete list. Please find a complete list in the enclosed spreadsheet, which contains further decline reasons that were not included in the previous response that you have on hand. Note, the spreadsheet contains four tabs: 'Main Benefits', 'Supplementary Assistance', 'Hardship Assistance' and 'Childcare Support'.

You will note that the tables include numerous declines under the reason 'Other'. Whereas this reason code does not provide further information on the type of the decline, Ministry staff can add more detailed notes about the decline into the Ministry's IT system whenever this reason code is used. However, the Ministry would not be able to provide these notes as they are held on client files and would, therefore, require substantial manual collation.

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 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 decline reasons, 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**