



6 April 2022

Tēnā koe

On 4 March 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many people are on Jobseeker now versus at the start of the pandemic? e.g., 25 March 2020 to 'now'.*
- *For people currently on Jobseeker, what is the distribution of duration? e.g., histogram breakdown in terms of months on Jobseeker*
- *Does age affect time spent on the dole? Can I get a cross-tab / matrix of duration unemployed versus age-group?*

On 7 March 2022, the Ministry informed you that information regarding the number of people accessing Jobseeker Support was publicly available. The Ministry publishes Benefit Fact Sheets that provide a high-level view of trends in benefit receipt, including Jobseeker Support since March 2020. These are available online at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/index.html.

Please note that during the COVID-19 pandemic, additional weekly and monthly COVID-19 reporting were produced for 2020, while a reduced amount of supporting information was provided with the Benefit Fact Sheets. As information regarding the first part of your request is already publicly available, this portion of your request is refused under Section 18 (d) of the Act.

On 10 March 2022, the Ministry informed you that, due to the complexity of the request, providing the data as requested to meet the second and third part of your request would likely incur a charge. You accepted that the Ministry would release information to you under the Act organised by standard continuous duration and standard age ranges.

Please find **Table One** in the attached Excel Spreadsheet, which shows the number of working age Jobseeker Support clients as at the end of February 2022, broken down by benefit sub-group, age group and continuous duration.

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 attached Excel spreadsheet 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 age and continuous duration of clients receiving Job Seeker Support, 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.

Nāku noa, nā

Bridget Saunders

Bridget Saunders
**Manager, Issue Resolution
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