



18 May 2022

Tēnā koe

On 2 May 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. For each region, the number of clients (caregivers) who received the Unsupported Child Benefit in the years ending 30 June 2019, 2020, and 2021.*
- 2. For each region, the number of clients (caregivers) who received the Orphan's Benefit in the years ending 30 June 2019, 2020, and 2021.*
- 3. For each region, the number of children for whom the Unsupported Child Benefit was paid in the years ending 30 June 2019, 2020, and 2021.*
- 4. For each region, the number of children for whom the Orphan's Benefit was paid in the years ending 30 June 2019, 2020, and 2021.*
- 5. For each region, the number of clients (caregivers) to whom a School and Year Start Up Payment was paid for a child in the years ending 30 June 2019, 2020, and 2021.*
- 6. For each region, the number of children for whom the School and Year Start Up Payment was paid in the years ending 30 June 2019, 2020, and 2021.*

Orphans Benefit and Unsupported Childs Benefit provide income support to the caregiver of a child whose parents are unable to support them. You can find more information at the following link:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/orphans-benefit-and-unsupported-childs-benefit/introduction.html.

The School and Year Start-up Payment provides non-taxable, non-recoverable financial assistance to assist with school related costs or other costs relating to the care of the child. These costs may result in additional financial pressure such as clothing, costs associated with sports club memberships, Scouts, or Kapa Haka etc. You can find more information at the following link:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/orphans-

[benefit-and-unsupported-childrens-benefit-products/school-and-year-start-up-payment/index.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/social-development/department-social-development/child-welfare/benefit-and-unsupported-childrens-benefit-products/school-and-year-start-up-payment/index.html).

Please find attached the Excel Spreadsheet which includes the following tables:

1. **Table One:** Number of caregivers with an Unsupported Child's Benefit or Orphans Benefit as at months ending June 2019, June 2020 and June 2021, broken down by MSD region.
2. **Table Two:** Number of children included in an Unsupported Child's Benefit or Orphans Benefit as at months ending June 2019, June 2020 and June 2021, broken down by MSD region.
3. **Table Three:** Number of caregivers with an Unsupported Child's Benefit or Orphans Benefit who received School and Year Start-Up Payments between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2021, broken down by MSD region.
4. **Table Four:** Number of Unsupported Child's Benefit or Orphans Benefit children who received School and Year Start-Up Payments between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2021, broken down by MSD region.

In regard to questions six of your request, the Ministry only records which child the School year and Start-Up Payment was made for when the application is automatically processed by the system (and the client makes no errors in their application).

If a client's application for a School and Year Start Up Payment requires manual processing (i.e., the application has been completed incorrectly, or there are discrepancies between the information provided by the client and that held by the Ministry), an approval will not be centrally recorded by the Ministry.

As such, this part of your request has been refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. 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, in the spirit of being helpful, the Ministry has provided the number of children for whom the School and Year Start Up Payment was made for when the application is automatically processed by the system in the years ending 30 June 2019, 2020, and 2021.

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 attachment on the Ministry'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 Unsupported Child Benefit, Orphan's Benefit and School and Year Start Up Payment, 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

Bridget Saunders

Bridget Saunders
**Manager, Issues Resolution
Service Delivery**