



3 November 2022

Tēnā koe

On 7 October 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Please provide me with the numbers around people on the job seekers benefit in the Timaru region.*
- *How many of those are actually on a sickness benefit and how many have a lasting disability which stops them from working long term and*
- *what do you have in place to find people with a disability to find appropriate work.*
- *How long are people on the benefit?*
- *What are the age groups?*
- *What are the skills of those on the benefit? Please provide information for the past 12 months.*

You requested information about the sickness benefit. From 15 July 2013 New Zealand's welfare system changed to better help people to prepare for employment and enter the workforce.

A person who would have received a sickness-related benefit now receives Jobseeker Support - Health Condition, Injury and Disability (JS HCD). People who are unable to work due to a health condition, injury or disability are exempt from work obligations for a period determined by an independent health practitioner. More information concerning work obligations can be accessed here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/obligations/index.html

A person who would have been eligible to receive an Invalid's Benefit, now receives a Supported Living Payment (SLP). This benefit provides assistance for those who are severely restricted or unable to work on a long-term basis, because of a health condition or disability.

People on the Supported Living Payment are not required to look for work, however many disabled people and people with health conditions are keen to work with the right support. More information about SLP can be found here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/supported-living-payment.html.

Please provide me with the numbers around people on the job seekers benefit in the Timaru region. How many of those are actually on a sickness benefit and how many have a lasting disability which stops them from working long term

Please see **Table One** in the **Appendix**, showing the number of clients receiving the JS HCD and SLP benefit types at the Timaru Service Centre as at the end of September 2022, broken down by benefit subgroup and continuous duration.

What do you have in place to find people with a disability to find appropriate work.

The Timaru Service Centre has a dedicated Case Management resource that works pro-actively with JS HCD and SLP clients as well as handling their income support requirements.

Supporting the dedicated Case Management resource, the Timaru Service Centre also have an Employment Coordinator working full-time with any clients who are deemed to be work ready in either a full-time or part-time capacity. Clients can be matched to suitable vacancies or marketed to employers where the client's skill set could be a good fit. Support is ongoing once employment is obtained to enable people to stay employed.

For those clients assessed as not work ready, the Case Managers or Employment Coordinator may direct them to training or to other external agencies working in the supported employment sector who may be better placed to provide a more specialised support that can assist the client to gain employment in some capacity.

How long are people on the benefit? What are the age groups?

Please see **Table One** in the **Appendix**, showing how long Timaru Service Centre clients receiving the JS HCD and SLP benefits have been receiving a benefit.

Please see **Table Two** in the **Appendix** showing the age groups of Timaru Service Centre clients receiving the JS HCD and SLP benefits.

What are the skills of those on the benefit? Please provide information for the past 12 months.

We are unable to provide you with this information 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.

We 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.

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 its **Appendix** 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, 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 Issue Resolution
Service Delivery**

Appendix

Table One: The number of Jobseeker Support - Health Condition, Injury or Disability (JS HCD)¹ and Supported Living Payment (SLP)² clients at the Timaru Service Centre as at end of September 2022, broken down by Benefit Subgroup and Continuous Duration.³

Benefit Subgroup	Continuous Duration											Total
	< 3 months	3-6 months	6 months-1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-6 years	6-8 years	8-10 years	Over 10 years	
JS HCD	66	54	78	90	78	54	30	18	30	15	36	552
SLP	15	33	69	96	84	90	84	48	111	81	651	1365

Table Two: The number of JS HCD and SLP at Timaru Service Centre as at end of September 2022, broken down by Benefit Subgroup and Age Group.

Benefit Subgroup	Age Group													Total
	16	17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	
JS HCD	0	0	18	66	66	60	54	42	51	54	87	57	0	549
SLP	3	6	27	72	84	69	72	78	171	204	237	333	12	1368

Confidentiality:

- To protect the confidentiality of individuals, the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- Table One and Table Two have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. Random rounding does not round down to zero. A value of one or two will be rounded to three. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals. The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

¹ The JS HCD Benefit Subgroup includes recipients currently receiving the Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability benefit. The JS HCD related Benefit Subgroup also includes recipients currently receiving the Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability Hardship benefit.

² The SLP Benefit Subgroup above includes recipients currently receiving the Supported Living Payment Health Condition & Disability benefit and does not include recipients of Supported Living Payment caring benefit.

³ Continuous Duration is defined as how long the current recipients of a benefit (or benefit group) have been continuously receiving a benefit in the wider benefit system, including time on all benefits excl. the Unsupported Child's Benefit, Orphan's Benefit, New Zealand Superannuation, Veteran's Pension and non-beneficiary assistance.