



2 June 2023

Tēnā koe

On 12 May 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Could you please provide me with the latest information on how many beneficiaries the Greater Wellington Region has and how many food cards (this may not be the term you use)*
- *Regions: Central, Porirua, Kapiti and Wairarapa*
- *Benefit type: General and Sickness*
- *Trend of beneficiaries of the two types above over the last 12 months*
- *How much in urgent food costs have been paid out in the same region over the past 12 months and broken down to month?*

The Ministry, through Work and Income, provides recoverable and non-recoverable financial assistance to help people meet an immediate need for essential items. A Special Needs Grant (SNG) is a one-off payment to help with an essential cost if clients can't pay it another way. Food is one of the essential costs we help people with when they are experiencing hardship.

More information about SNGs and food costs can be found at the following links:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/special-needs-grant.html).
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html).

In the attached Appendix, you will find the following tables:

- **Table One:** The number of food grants (SNGs) and amounts granted in the Wellington region service centres, Kapiti service centre and Wairarapa service centre for the period 1 May 2022 to 30 April 2023, broken down by benefit type.

- **Table Two:** The number of working age main benefit clients in Wellington region service centres, Kapiti service centre and Wairarapa service centre, as at the end of each month from May 2022 to April 2023.

The Ministry considers your request for 'trends' to be captured through the data provided in these tables.

In order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

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'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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

*Bridget Saunders*

Bridget Saunders  
**Manager Issue Resolution  
Service Delivery**