



26 June 2023

Tēnā koe

On 4 June 2023, 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 following information:*

- 1.** *How many persons on main benefits also receive the Special Benefit (most current data)?*
- 2.** *How many persons on main benefits also receive Temporary Additional Support (most current data)?*
- 3.** *How many persons without children on main benefits also receive the Special Benefit (most current data)?*
- 4.** *How many persons without children on main benefits also receive Temporary Additional Support (most current data)?*
- 5.** *How many single persons on main benefits also receive the Special Benefit (most current data)?*
- 6.** *How many single persons on main benefits also receive Temporary Additional Support (most current data)?*

Special Benefit (SPB) is a discretionary non-taxable benefit. Its intent is to provide assistance to clients whose particular circumstances are causing them hardship.

A client does not need to be getting a benefit to qualify for Special Benefit. However, payments of Special Benefit cannot be made to people who were not getting it or had not applied for it immediately before 1 April 2006. Special Benefit was replaced by Temporary Additional Support on this date.

Special Benefit continues to be payable to clients who were receiving it, or had applied for it, immediately before 1 April 2006. Payments can continue until they:

- no longer qualify to get Special Benefit **or**
- choose to cancel Special Benefit

There is no time limit on Special Benefit if payment continues to be justified. However, Special Benefit is not intended as a long-term solution to a client's financial shortfall unless the client's individual circumstances justify this. It is paid to help clients meet their essential living costs while they make efforts to reduce their commitments and live within their usual income.

The rate of Special Benefit should be regularly reviewed and adjusted as required to reflect the client's needs. More information on Special Benefits is available on the Work and Income website, here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-benefit/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-benefit/index.html)

Temporary Additional Support (TAS) is non-taxable extra help paid for a maximum of 13 weeks. It is paid as a last resort to help clients with their regular essential living costs that cannot be met from their chargeable income and other resources.

Clients must ensure that they are accessing all other assistance available to them and take reasonable steps towards reducing their costs and increasing their chargeable income.

A client does not have to be getting a main benefit to qualify for Temporary Additional Support. More information on Temporary Additional Support is available on the Work and Income website, here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/temporary-additional-support/introduction.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/temporary-additional-support/introduction.html)

Please see attached **Appendix** which contains:

**Table One:** The number of working age main beneficiaries in receipt of TAS or SPB as at the end of May 2023.

**Table Two:** The number of working age main beneficiaries without children in receipt of TAS or SPB as at the end of May 2023.

**Table Three:** The number of single working age main beneficiaries in receipt of TAS or SPB as at the end of May 2023.

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 regarding data on main benefits, Special Benefit, and Temporary Additional 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

*Bridget Saunders*

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

**Appendix.**

**Table One: The number of working age main beneficiaries in receipt of TAS or SPB as at the end of May 2023**

<b>As at Month Ending</b>	<b>Number of TAS</b>	<b>Number of SPB</b>
<b>May 2023</b>	73,419	567

**Table Two: The number of working age main beneficiaries without children in receipt of TAS or SPB as at the end of May 2023**

<b>As at Month Ending</b>	<b>Number of TAS</b>	<b>Number of SPB</b>
<b>May 2023</b>	48,969	492

**Table Three: The number of single working age main beneficiaries in receipt of TAS or SPB as at the end of May 2023**

<b>As at Month Ending</b>	<b>Number of TAS</b>	<b>Number of SPB</b>
<b>May 2023</b>	69,885	546

**Notes:**

TAS is Temporary Additional Support. SPB is Special Benefit.

Working age is 18 to 64 years old.

Main Benefits exclude NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit.

Single clients include the categories: 'Single', 'Single - Living Alone', 'Single - Sharing'.

To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.

These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.

The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.