



28 June 2023

Tēnā koe

On 28 April 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

Kia ora, I am needing data on mental health, drug, addiction and housing. We are wanting to justify the need to establish a mental health and drug and addictions housing facility in Rotorua but require numbers to justify the need. I require National as well as local/regional data. The last research paper I read is 2005 therefore outdated data. I would appreciate your assistance/ direction

On 2 May 2023, the Ministry contacted you and advised that your request is broad in scope and likely to be refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to provide the information requested.

As such, the Ministry asked if you were able to refine your request in order to assist us in providing you with the information you require. We suggested refining your request to a specific period of time to allow for comparison.

You responded to the Ministry on the same day and advised you would appreciate any information or direction to enable you to access national and regional statistics. You also advised that you required data from 2018 to present, regarding people who are homeless and people with mental health and addictions.

On 30 May 2023, the Ministry contacted you again to discuss your request and have clarified the information that the Ministry is able to provide which would be more helpful to you.

We have clarified your request to:

- *Number of people in receipt of a Benefit with the primary incapacity group 'Substance Abuse' or 'Psychiatric Conditions'*
- *Broken down by age, gender and ethnicity*
- *Broken down by Rotorua and Nationally*
- *For the period by quarter 2018 to current*

Beneficiaries receiving health-related benefits must have a signed medical certificate from an independent health practitioner, which states the primary reason they are unable to work.

A person's primary condition may be recorded as substance abuse or psychiatric condition, but there are often other associated conditions the person may also be managing. These could include, for example, liver disease, gastrointestinal problems and bacterial infections.

Since your request seeks information on people who are on a benefit, the relevant benefit payments for clients on health-related benefits would be the Jobseeker Support – Health Condition, Injury, or Disability (JS HCD) and Supported Living Payment (SLP).

You may be aware that from 15 July 2013, New Zealand's welfare system changed to better help people prepare for employment. The focus is on what people can do to achieve a better future for themselves and their family. Three benefits replaced most of the previous benefit types. These are as follows:

- **JS** – Replaced the Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit, Domestic Purposes Benefit (Women Alone, Sole Parent if youngest child is aged 14 and over) and the Widow's Benefit (without children, or if youngest child is aged 14 and over). JS is available to people who can usually work full-time. It also includes people who can only work part-time or can't look for work at the moment because they have a health condition, injury or disability. More information about JS can be found here:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/jobseeker-support.html.

Information specific to JS HCD can be found here:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/client-has-a-health-condition-injury-or-disability-01.html.

- **Sole Parent Support (SPS)** – Replaced the Domestic Purposes Benefit (Sole Parent if youngest child is aged under 14) and the Widow's Benefit (if youngest child is aged under 14). SPS is available to sole parents caring for children under the age of 14 who are available for or are ready to prepare for part-time work. More information about SPS can be found here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/sole-parent-support.html.

- **SLP** – Replaced the Invalid’s Benefit and Domestic Purposes Benefit (Caring for Sick or Infirm). The SLP is available to people who are severely restricted or unable to work on a long-term basis because of a health condition or disability, and for people who are caring for someone who needs significant care. More information about SLP can be found here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/supported-living-payment.html.

In response to your questions, please see the attached **Appendix**, with three tables:

Table One: Working age JS-HCD and SLP with primary incapacity group as at the end of each quarter from March 2018 to March 2023, by quarter ending, primary incapacity group, Territorial Local Authority and age group.

Table Two: Working age JS- HCD and SLP with primary incapacity group as at the end of each quarter from March 2018 to March 2023, by quarter ending, primary incapacity group, Territorial Local Authority and gender.

Table Three: Working age JS-HCD and SLP with primary incapacity group as at the end of each quarter from March 2018 to March 2023, by quarter ending, primary incapacity group, Territorial Local Authority and total response ethnicity.

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.

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

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