



19 May 2023

Tēnā koe

On 25 April 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *My question relates to the present benefit and pension system and how it could be improved or replaced. Has the option of Universal Basic Income been considered?*
- *Has a feasibility study been undertaken?*
- *How recent, and what was the result?*
- *Related question: How many children have been born solely for the purpose of acquiring a benefit?*
- *Related: How many of those have been found to show signs of abuse, self-abuse, learning difficulties, and/or antisocial behaviour?*

I am refusing all parts of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

The Ministry works to provide people with employment, and income support and you can find helpful information about how the Ministry assists people here: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/>.

You may have read about the work of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG). In brief, the WEAG was tasked by the Government to look into overhauling the welfare system to ensure that it was fair and more accessible for all New Zealanders. The WEAG completed their report in February 2019 and you can find it here: <https://www.weag.govt.nz/>.

Looking ahead, the Government, in collaboration with the Ministry, continues to be committed to the overhaul of the welfare system. This includes looking at income support, addressing debt, improving supports and services for disabled people and people with health conditions, and much more. You can read updates on the Ministry's website here:

www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/cabinet-papers/2023/welfare-overhaul-work-programme-update-key-priorities-and-next-steps.html.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

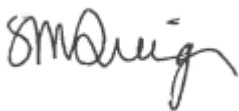
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 about Universal Basic Income, data about having children to acquire a benefit and abuse of those children, 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



Sarah Quigan
Manager
Official Information Team