



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

8 November 2023

Tēnā koe

On 10 October 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I was just sent this great link <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/weekly-reporting/2023/sep/data-file-income-support-weekly-update-22-september-2023.xlsx> and have 4 questions, please:

1. *What is the high-level URL to see all of these reports, please? I tried shortened URL versions, but couldn't get any to work. Nor could I get 29-september to work*
2. *How have you calculated the following %s? I can't see any population workings, and the numbers don't quite align to mine using the Stats NZ's <https://infoshare.stats.govt.nz/> > Population > Population Estimates - DPE > Estimated Resident Population by Age and Sex (1991+) (Qrtly-Mar/Jun/Sep/Dec) [chose all ages from 18-64, and select 'As at']*

Percentage of the estimated working-age population receiving a main benefit	11.2	11.3	11.3	11.3
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3. *How do we see these weekly reports for the full time series going back before 2022, please, so that we can see the trends over many years?*
4. *Are there 65-year-olds that still receive a main benefit rather than superannuation? If so, how many, and how do you allow for this in your working-age population %s above – more specifically, what is the denominator if some 65+ get main benefits and some don't?*

I will respond to your questions in turn.

1. *What is the high-level URL to see all of these reports, please? I tried shortened URL versions, but couldn't get any to work. Nor could I get 29-september to work*

The high-level link for the Ministry's weekly reporting is: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/weekly-reporting/>.

For all our other regular reporting, the link is: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/index.html>.

Please note that, due to data processing delays, The Ministry had to put our regular reporting on hold between 29 September and 27 October 2023, until these underlying data issues were resolved. This is why the URL you were trying to access did not work at the time you wrote to us, but it is now operative.

3. *How do we see these weekly reports for the full time series going back before 2022, please, so that we can see the trends over many years?*

The Ministry began publishing weekly reports in April 2020. Please refer to the weekly reporting archive on our website, here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/weekly-reporting/archive/index.html.

2. *How have you calculated the following %s? I can't see any population workings, and the numbers don't quite align to mine using the Stats NZ's <https://infoshare.stats.govt.nz/> > Population > Population Estimates - DPE > Estimated Resident Population by Age and Sex (1991+) (Qrtly-Mar/Jun/Sep/Dec) [chose all ages from 18-64, and select 'As at']*

Percentage of the estimated working-age population receiving a main benefit	11.2	11.3	11.3	11.3
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To calculate the percentage of the estimated working-age population receiving a main benefit, the Ministry uses Statistics New Zealand's estimated resident population. For consistency, we use the estimates as at 30 June each year. As Statistics NZ don't release a specific population estimate for people aged 18 to 64, we calculate this by subtracting the '65+' age group from the '18+' age group.

4. *Are there 65-year-olds that still receive a main benefit rather than superannuation? If so, how many, and how do you allow for this in your working-age population %s above – more specifically, what is the denominator if some 65+ get main benefits and some don't?*

People aged 65 and over may receive a main benefit instead of New Zealand Superannuation, usually because they do not meet the residency qualifications for New Zealand Superannuation, which you can read more about on the Ministry's website here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/new-zealand-superannuation/residency-01.html.

If you are interested in reading the qualifications for different types of assistance, please refer to the Ministry's website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/index.html.

We do not include these clients in our working-age population calculations.

Please see the below table for a breakdown of clients aged 65 and over in receipt of a main benefit, as at 30 August 2023.

Benefit Group	August 2023
Emergency Benefit	3,252
Emergency Maintenance Allowance	3
Jobseeker Support Related	705
Supported Living Payment Related	2,247
Sole Parent Support	12
Widows Benefit Overseas	3
TOTAL	6,216

Notes for table:

- Main benefits exclude New Zealand Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, non-beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit.
- To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- This data table has had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- Random rounding does not round to zero. The numbers one and two are rounded to three.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given columns or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

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 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 regarding benefit data, 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**