



17 April 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 25 February 2025, requesting data on how many people in New Zealand have had their benefit reduced due to being in hospital for over 13 weeks – both currently and since 2019.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

The reduction in benefit due to hospitalisation for over 13 weeks is a requirement set out under section 206 of the Social Security Act 2018.

Please see the attached **Appendix** for the number of clients receiving a benefit at 'in hospital for more than 13 weeks' rate during the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2024, as at quarter end.

Please note that due to the nature of the data, the Ministry is providing you with point-in-time statistics.

The attached data refers to three separate rates that cover clients that have their benefit reduced due to being in hospital for over 13 weeks. For clarity, an explanation of each is set out below:

Hospital Rate – Clients in Hospital for More than 13 Weeks

The main benefit rate of payment is reduced to the hospital rate after the client (or their partner) has been in hospital for more than 13 weeks (not after getting a benefit for 13 weeks). The hospital rate allows for the cost of personal items, which patients are expected to provide for themselves. The net weekly hospital rate is \$56.58 (as at 1 April 2025).

This rate is used for all main benefit payments that need to be reduced to the hospital rate from the 14th week of hospitalisation.

New Zealand Superannuation Hospital Rate

This rate is the same as the above, but instead of being for main benefit payments, it is for New Zealand Superannuation payments that need to be reduced to the hospital rate from the 14th week of hospitalisation.

Non-Standard Rate

If the hospital rate isn't enough to cover a client's costs, the Ministry may be able to pay more. This will depend on what expenses and income the client has while in hospital.

If a client is required to make Child Support payments and does not qualify for an exemption from Inland Revenue Child Support, the rate of payment can be increased to the hospital rate plus any Child Support payments that are required to be apportioned from the client's payments.

Couples with dependent children do not have their benefit payment reduced regardless of how long they are in hospital, and couples without dependent children are also able to receive additional support. The rate of Veteran's Pension is also not reduced after 13 weeks hospitalisation.

For more information, please see the following links:

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/tell-us/hospital.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/hospitalisation-01.html

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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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Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services