



27 June 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 28 May 2025, requesting the following information:

A breakdown of the:

- *Mean*
- *Median*
- *Mode*
- *Maximum, and*
- *Distribution (preferably as a distribution graph)*

For the length of time spent on each of the following benefits individually:

- *Jobseeker support*
- *Accommodation Supplement*
- *Emergency Benefit*
- *Sole Parent Support*
- *Youth Payment*
- *Young Parent Payment*
- *Child Disability Allowance*
- *Supported Living Payment*

As well as for being on any of them continuously.

I would like that information for every year starting from 2014 up till 2024 inclusive.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Before I respond to your request, I have provided you with some general information on welfare reform, for your information below.

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, including the types you requested information for. These are:

- **Jobseeker Support** – 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). Jobseeker Support 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, for example because they have a health condition, injury or disability.
- **Sole Parent Support** – 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). Sole Parent Support 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.
- **Supported Living Payment** – Replaced the Invalid's Benefit and Domestic Purposes Benefit (Caring for Sick or Infirm). The Supported Living Payments 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.

Note that when these benefits were replaced, their current duration in the Ministry's reporting was reset to zero. This means that the data provided in this response for these three benefits is only effective from 15 July 2013 at the earliest, regardless of whether a client was receiving an equivalent benefit prior to this date.

Please find my decision on your request in the attached **Appendix** which provides the following tables in response to your request:

Table 1 - Continuous duration for working age clients as at end of December for the years 2014 to 2024, by benefit and year.

Table 2 - Current duration for working age clients as at end of December for the years 2014 to 2024 by benefit and year.

I am refusing your request for information on Accommodation Supplement, Child Disability Allowance and a breakdown by distribution under section 18(f) of the Act, as it requires substantial collation. In order to provide you with this information, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

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

pp.



Anna Graham

General Manager

Ministerial and Executive Services