



14 May 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 11 April 2025, requesting information about the Out of School Care and Recreation Subsidy (OSCAR). On 23 April 2025, you refined your request.

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

- 1. The number of applications received for OSCAR subsidy in 2024 (ideally with a breakdown by region) or financial year if that's easier May 2024 – April 2025.*
- 2. The number of people in New Zealand who have received the OSCAR subsidy (ideally with a breakdown by region) or financial year if that's easier May 2024 – April 2025?*

To address your questions 1 and 2, please find attached:

- **Appendix:** Number of Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) subsidies, distinct clients, and applications.

The Appendix contains two tables that address your request.

- **Table 1:** Number of Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) subsidies, and distinct clients as at end of each month during the period 1 May 2024 to 31 March 2025, by regional council and month ending.
- **Table 2:** Number of Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) applications during the period 1 May 2024 to 31 March 2025, by regional council and month received.

- 3. The number of applications returned or delayed due to incomplete, missing paper documentation, handwriting errors, dates and other writing infringements.*

I am refusing your request for the number of applications returned or delayed under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required

to collate this information. If held, this information would only be contained within individual client files, which would each require manual review to respond to your request. 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 request 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.

Between 1 January 2024 to 11 April 2025, the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) received 33,809 OSCAR declarations. Please note, as per your refinement on 23 April 2025, the Ministry is only providing you with data on OSCAR declarations only which excludes applications for OSCAR care, as these cannot be disaggregated from other applications for childcare assistance (such as the Childcare Subsidy).

The average number of tasks on hold in the declarations processing queue at any one time during that period was 104. Each form contains information about what the applicant needs to provide as supporting documentation. Incomplete applications are the most significant factor in delays to processing OSCAR applications. Applicants not providing the required documents with their applications, or who haven't filled out all information means that their application must be placed 'on hold' until further information is provided. We are unable to provide more specific information on the number of applications delayed without manually reviewing individual client files.

To mitigate the impact on clients caused by processing delays, the Ministry team administering childcare subsidies (including OSCAR) encourage staff to call clients to discuss what is needed to see if we can get outstanding information over the phone – for example applicants can upload required documents to MyMSD during the call or alternatively use email or mail to resolve issues with their application.

Longer term, to address these issues, the Ministry is undertaking a multi-year transformational Te Pae Tawhiti Programme, which aims to make it easier for people to get the help they need from us and provide a better overall experience for the more than one million New Zealanders and the 2,000 partners we work with. You can find more details here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/te-pae-tawhiti/index.html.

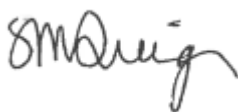
The Ministry also has close links to providers in the OSCAR sector, through partnerships like the OSCAR Expert Advisory Group and the Quarterly Sector Engagement forums. These opportunities allow different parts of the Ministry or our partners to have direct links to organisations that are delivering services to mutual clients and those that are supporting whānau to access financial support they need to sustain employment, training, or other circumstances where there is a need for OSCAR care.

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