



20 February 2026

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 14 January 2026, requesting updated data on non-financial sanctions applied to Jobseeker Support recipients since May 2025.

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

You requested an update of the data the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) provided you on 17 September 2025:

- 1. Can MSD please provide an update on how many people on Jobseeker support have had a non-financial sanction applied since they came into force in May 2025 - and what those sanctions were (ie voluntary work or payment card)?*
- 2. Can MSD please provide any outcome of those non-financial sanctions however it's recorded ie people remained on benefit or were taken off?*

Please see the attached **Appendix, Number of non-financial sanctions imposed on working age main benefit clients with work obligations during 1 May to 31 December 2025**, by benefit type, non-financial sanction type and outcome.

To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. These data tables have had random rounding where values have been randomly rounded to the nearest multiple of three. This is applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals. The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

This being the case, some information in the attached table has been marked as 'S'. This information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

Please also note the following caveats with the data:

- Any outcomes reported previously as 'not completed' were either in progress at the time or clients were non-compliant because they did not fully complete the sanction resulting in their benefit stopping.
- Outcome 'overturned' is used when a client has provided a good and sufficient reason for not completing the activity they were required to do that resulted in the failure. The obligation failure and sanction is removed from the client's record.
- Outcome 'deactivated' is used when an obligation failure is correctly applied but the sanction stopped due to the client having a change in circumstances (resulting in a change to their obligations).

As explained in my previous letter of 17 September 2025, the non-financial sanctions, Money Management and Community Work Experience were introduced on 26 May 2025. In that response we advised that from 26 May to 31 July 2025 nine non-financial sanctions had been applied.

A further two non-financial sanctions, Report Job Search and Upskilling were introduced on 20 October 2025.

Since 1 August to 31 December 2025, nine clients were given a non-financial sanction.

This brings the total number of non-financial sanctions applied between 26 May to 31 December 2025 to 18. The majority of these clients remain on benefit.

As previously advised, non-financial sanctions are an alternative option to a financial sanction for some clients with work obligations. To be eligible for a non-financial sanction a client must be:

- in case management or have dependent children, and
- it must be their first obligation failure, and
- they must contact the Ministry and attend a re-compliance appointment within the five-working day dispute period (while at orange in the traffic light system).

For further context, when a client attends an appointment within the five-working day dispute period, the Ministry's priority is to determine if a case manager can arrange for the client to re-comply before the sanction takes effect on the sixth working day. Many clients have their obligation failure resolved at this stage. This significantly reduces the size of the cohort eligible for non-financial sanctions.

If a client is unable to re-comply within the dispute period, the Ministry must assess their circumstances to determine if imposing a non-financial sanction is appropriate, and if so which of the four non-financial sanctions is the most appropriate for the client. Each non-financial sanction has different factors to consider which clients are assessed against.

If clients don't get in touch within the dispute period, a financial sanction is imposed.

More information on non-financial sanctions can be found here:

- [Community Work Experience](#)
- [Money Management](#)
- [Report Job Search](#)

- [Upskilling](#)

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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham  
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