



17 June 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 12 May 2026 requesting information about financial support the Ministry of Social Development provides to refugees.

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

- *The number of refugees currently receiving financial assistance or benefits from the Ministry of Social Development, as at the most recent available date.*
- *The average number of dependent children per refugee family receiving such support.*

Please refer to the attached **Appendix** for information on refugees currently receiving assistance and the average number of dependent children.

Table 5 has some numbers that have been suppressed. In order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs and public interest in the information.

- *Please also provide, for the financial year from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, the total amount of financial assistance paid in dollar terms to refugees receiving support from the Ministry of Social Development. If available, I would appreciate a breakdown by benefit type.*

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. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it requires substantial collation. 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.

- *The countries of origin of refugees currently receiving support, including a breakdown by region (e.g. Middle East, Asia, Europe, and other regions), and, if available, a list of the main countries of origin.*

I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

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
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