



9 NOV 2015

Ms Chrissy Glen
fyi-request-3090-ab2718f6@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Glen

On 27 August 2015 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about Special Needs Grants, the Recoverable Assistance Programme and Benefit Advances.

Work and Income, a service line of the Ministry of Social Development, provides hardship assistance to help people pay for essential items or services they need urgently.

Hardship assistance includes Advances, Recoverable Assistance Payments and Special Needs Grants:

- Advances are recoverable payments available to people receiving a main benefit who require assistance to meet a particular immediate need for an essential item.
- Recoverable Assistance Payments are recoverable financial assistance to non-beneficiaries to meet essential immediate needs for specific items or services.
- Special Needs Grants provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to people to meet immediate needs.

More information about hardship assistance is available on Work and Income's website at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/how-we-can-help-you/dont-have-enough-income.html

You have requested the following data:

- *Details of the number of clients who received Special Needs Grants payments broken down by year (between end of June 2008 and year end June 2015), broken down benefit type and the average number of payments a client has received for food per year.*
- *The number of clients who have received Special Needs Grants for food broken down by the number of payments they received per year, the average value of each payment made per year and the average value of each payment per month.*

- *Additional breakdowns of hardship assistance from the end of June 2008 to end of June 2015 by categories such as bedding, dentures, spectacles, hearing aids, four Steps to Freedom, school uniforms, child restraints, safety helmets, school, education, attendance at Funerals and tangihanga, loss of property from fire or burglary, telephone installation, clothing, emergency household needs, car repairs, travel for stranded persons, grants for driver licences and other emergency payments summarised annually by hardship payment type.*

The information you have requested is not available in the form you have requested through standard reporting. It would require a significant amount of work to collate this data. As such your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. 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.

The Ministry has responded to a number of Written Parliamentary Questions regarding hardship grants advance benefit payments which are available on the New Zealand Parliament website. This includes responses from the Minister for Social Development that you may find of use: www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/business/gwa

The Ministry of Social Development provides a lot of publicly available information regarding benefit and hardship payments on its website. The Benefit Fact Sheets provide a high-level view of trends in benefit receipt over the past five years. They present numbers and characteristics of clients on benefits at the end of the current quarter and for the equivalent quarter one year ago and five years ago. Work and Income divides New Zealand into 11 administrative regions. The following link to the benefit fact sheet provides benefit data by main benefit groups, benefit sub-categories, supplementary and hardship assistance, and a range of other selected client characteristics: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/

Please note that the Ministry's benefit fact sheets showing Hardship Assistance payments are for the last five years only. The Ministry will provide you with the previous two years Hardship Assistance payments from June 2008 to March 2010 as per the standard reporting that is available on Work and Income's website shortly. I apologise for any inconvenience that this might cause.

On 20 August 2015, you emailed the Ministry requesting details of the regulations in force under 132AD (Disability Allowances) and 132AB (Temporary Additional Support) of the Social Security Act 1964. These details are available on Work and Income website:


www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/legislation/acts/social-security-act-1964/section-132ad-regulations-on-use-of-disability-all.html

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/legislation/acts/social-security-act-1964/section-132ab-regulations-relating-to-temporary-ad.html

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response in relation to hardship assistance and regulations in force under the Social Security Act 1964 by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



PP Carl Crafar

Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery