



Holly Willson

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Tēnā koe Holly Willson

On 1 October 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. Please provide me with the number, gender and age of recipients receiving the Sole Parent Support benefit by quarter periods, for the quarters ended June 2020, September 2020, December 2020, March 2021, June 2021 (by quarter)*
- 2. Please provide me with the number and age of children living in households receiving the Sole Parent Support benefit by quarter, for the quarters ended June 2020, September 2020, December 2020, March 2021, June 2021, September 2021.*
- 3. Please provide me with the incidence of households receiving the Sole Parent Support in conjunction with the Accommodation Supplement, Jobseeker Support, and/or the Emergency Benefit or Emergency Maintenance Support by quarter for the quarters ended: June 2020, September 2020, December 2020, March 2021, June 2021, September 2021.*

On 17 October 2021, you emailed the Ministry requesting that the data be broken down further by ethnicity.

On 28 October 2021, the Ministry emailed you of the need to extend your request as more time was required for necessary consultations, in accordance with section 15(1) and 15A of the Act.

Sole Parent Support provides income support for sole parents with one or more dependent children. A client applying for Sole Parent Support must have one or more dependent children (the dependent child or the youngest dependent child must be aged under 14 years) and be one of the following:

- living apart from their partner and lost the support or being inadequately maintained by their partner
- divorced or had their civil union dissolved
- single (never had a partner)
- has lost the regular support of their partner as their partner has been imprisoned or is subject to release or detention conditions that prevent employment, or
- their partner has died

To qualify for Sole Parent Support a client must also:

- be aged 20 years or older

- have continuously lived in New Zealand for 2 years or more since becoming a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, and
- be ordinarily resident in New Zealand when they first apply for benefit

You can find more information regarding Sole Parent Support at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/sole-parent-support/introduction.html.

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will address your questions in turn:

1. *Please provide me with the number, gender and age of recipients receiving the Sole Parent Support benefit by quarter periods, for the quarters ended June 2020, September 2020, December 2020, March 2021, June 2021 (by quarter)*

You can find this information in the Benefit Fact Sheet on the Ministry's website at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/2021/quarterly-benefit-fact-sheets-national-benefit-tables-june-2021.xlsx.

As this information is already publicly available, this part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act.

2. *Please provide me with the number and age of children living in households receiving the Sole Parent Support benefit by quarter, for the quarters ended June 2020, September 2020, December 2020, March 2021, June 2021, September 2021.*

Please see enclosed **Appendix A**, which includes the following two tables:

- **Table One:** The number of children included in Sole Parent Support applications as at the quarters ending June 2020 to September 2021, broken down by age group.
- **Table Two:** The number of children included in Sole Parent Support as at quarters ending June 2020 to September 2021, broken down by ethnicity of beneficiary.

Please note the ethnicity classification that is used to construct this table does not necessarily align with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity. Ethnicity details recorded by the Ministry have been gathered under a variety of classification methods as clients come into contact with the Ministry. The ethnicity data may be self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct. While the Ministry collects multiple ethnicities from clients, we only report a unique form of 'identified' ethnicity for core benefit data (one ethnic group per person with Māori coming first, Pacific groups second followed by other groups ending with NZ European).

3. *Please provide me with the incidence of households receiving the Sole Parent Support in conjunction with the Accommodation Supplement, Jobseeker Support, and/or the Emergency Benefit or Emergency Maintenance Support by quarter for the quarters ended: June 2020, September 2020, December 2020, March 2021, June 2021, September 2021.*

This is not standard reporting for the Ministry and would require substantial manual collation to generate the data. As such, this part of your request is refused under

section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

In the Spirit of being helpful, please see attached the following table in **Appendix A**:

- **Table Three:** The number of clients receiving Sole Parent Support and the Accommodation Supplement simultaneously, as at quarters ending June 2020 to September 2021.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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 this response regarding the number of children included in Sole Parent Support, 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

Bridget Saunders

Bridget Saunders
**Manager, Issues Resolution
Service Delivery**

Appendix A.

Table One: The number of children included in Sole Parent Support as at the quarters ending June 2020 to September 2021, broken down by age group.

Quarter Ending	Under 5 years Children	Age 5-13 years Children	Over 13 years Children	Total Number of Children
June 2020	42,237	72,720	11,274	126,231
September 2020	42,876	74,985	12,150	130,011
December 2020	43,614	77,559	11,892	133,065
March 2021	43,005	76,899	12,207	132,114
June 2021	42,876	75,834	12,405	131,115
September 2021	43,308	76,617	13,026	132,948

Table Two: The number of children included in Sole Parent Support as at quarters ending June 2020 to September 2021, broken down by ethnicity of beneficiary.

Quarter Ending	Ethnicity of Beneficiary					Total Number of Children
	Māori Children	Pacific Children	NZ European Children	Other Children	Unspecified Children	
June 2020	62,424	15,879	32,490	12,192	3,246	126,231
September 2020	63,918	16,446	33,504	12,630	3,516	130,011
December 2020	65,385	16,707	34,236	12,981	3,756	133,062
March 2021	64,839	16,818	33,639	13,002	3,816	132,117
June 2021	64,449	16,626	33,219	12,906	3,918	131,115
September 2021	65,109	16,941	33,531	13,209	4,158	132,951

Table Three: The number of Sole Parent Support receiving Accommodation Supplement as at quarters ending June 2020 to September 2021.

Quarter Ending	Sole Parent Support
June 2020	45,138
September 2020	46,716
December 2020	48,198
March 2021	46,122
June 2021	45,744
September 2021	46,431

Notes for Tables One, Two and Three:

- Table One and Two is a count of children and not benefits.
- The ethnic group of children is based on the ethnicity of the beneficiary.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept.
- Ethnic groups do not currently align with Statistics New Zealand ethnicity groupings
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three 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.