



9 April 2026

Kendra Horne

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Tēnā koe Kendra Horne,

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your request of 10 February 2026 which was subsequently transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry), for information on DSS recipients broken down by primary disability and support type.

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.

- *Of those supported by Whaikaha-funded Disability Support Services (DSS), how many are currently identified as:*
 - *Non-speaking or having complex communication needs.*
 - *Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) as their primary mode of communication.*

For context, these services are delivered by a third-party provider who is contracted by the Ministry. The Ministry and its contracted providers do not record or categorise DSS recipient's disabilities using descriptors such as non-speaking or having complex communication needs and also does not record information identifying DSS recipients' primary means of communication. This section of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the documents alleged to contain the information do not exist.

- *A breakdown of the 18–30 disabled population by primary disability type (e.g., intellectual, physical, sensory, or neurodiverse).*

Please refer to Table One in the **Appendix** below for this information.

- *Data on the number of individuals in this age group currently residing in community-based supported living versus those receiving individualised funding (IF) for home-based support.*

Please refer to Table Two in the **Appendix** below for this information.

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 for information on DSS recipients broken down by primary disability and support type, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

Appendix

Table One: Data on DSS recipients aged 18-30 broken down by Disability Category.

Disability Category	DSS Recipients (aged 18-30 as at 31/01/2026)
Intellectual	5757
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	5273
Other	3212
Physical	1142
Sensory	697
Neurological	81

Table Two: Data on DSS recipients aged 18-30 broken down by Service Subcategory

Service Subcategory	DSS Recipients (aged 18-30 as at 31/01/2026)
Individualised Funding	3912
Supported Living	1191
Community Residential Care in Group Homes	776
Community Residential Care for Children and Young People	8
Community Residential Care in an Aged Residential Care Setting	6
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Notes:

- This data has been taken from the most recent data refresh (31/1/2026).
- One person may have multiple disabilities and/or receiving multiple services. Therefore, for both data sets, there will be people who have been counted multiple times for multiple categories/services.
- The count of distinct DSS recipients aged between 18 and 30 is 9850.
- Those recipients aged 18 to 30 has been calculated only by including people whose date of birth is between 31/01/1996 to 31/01/2028.

- For service subcategory, we have included both Community group home and supported living services as we have interpreted community-based supported living as either of these subcategories.