



6 September 2022

Tēnā koe

On 9 August 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The benefit factsheets are useful for observing general population trends, and trends broken down by one level of subgroup (i.e benefits by duration, benefits by age group, benefits by work readiness etc...)*

*However, I'm interested in looking a little deeper and allowing two characteristics to deviate. Specifically, can you please provide benefit numbers by **continuous duration, work ready vs health condition and age group simultaneously**? E.g 18-25 year olds, work ready receiving a benefit for more than one year.*

*I'm only interested in **Jobseeker** benefit numbers here. Please provide this data in quarterly format, back to June 2012.*

Jobseeker Support is a temporary benefit paid for up to 52 weeks while clients look for work, are in training for work or unable to work due to a health condition, injury or disability. If a client still requires Jobseeker Support after 52 weeks, they must complete the 52-week reapplication process. You can find more information regarding Jobseeker Support and qualifications at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/introduction.html.

Often those who are on Jobseeker Support for longer periods have more complex and significant barriers to employment. The Ministry provides tailored support for those who have more significant barriers to employment, with assistance that includes help with training and upskilling.

Even though there was government support like the Wage Subsidy during COVID-19 pandemic, there was still a large number of people who lost their jobs, in particular women and young people.

In 2018 there was a downturn in the manufacturing and construction industry. The increase in Jobseeker Support numbers during this time period is likely due to broader economic and labour market conditions. Generally speaking, there are a number of reasons someone may not be able to return to work quickly.

Economic recovery moves at different speeds across different industries, and people may need retraining in some instances. There are also a number of individual circumstances that make entering work difficult.

Jobseeker Support is available to people who can usually work full-time. It also includes people who can only work part-time or can't look for work at the moment, for example because they have a health condition, injury or disability.

To qualify for Jobseeker Support on the ground of a health condition, injury or disability, the client must meet certain medical qualifications.

The client must be:

- Limited in their capacity or unable to work full-time due to a health condition, injury or disability or
- In employment, but because of a health condition, injury or disability cannot work or can only work at a reduced level.

To support their application for a Jobseeker Support (health condition, injury or disability) a client must provide a medical certificate from a health practitioner.

Please see enclosed the following tables in the **Appendix**:

- **Table One:** The number of working age Jobseeker Support Health Condition and Disability, as at end of June 2014 to end of June 2022, by Age group, Continuous Duration, and
- **Table Two:** The number of working age Jobseeker Support Work Ready, as at end of June 2014 to end of June 2022, by Age group, Continuous Duration.

The tables provide numbers from the year ending June 2014, rather than 2012 as you requested, because Jobseeker Support was established in 2013. Jobseeker Support replaced the previous Unemployment Benefit.

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 letter and attachments on the Ministry'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 about Jobseeker Support benefit numbers, 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**