



25 October 2024

Miss W. Forest

[fyi-request-28782-38b55ab9@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-28782-38b55ab9@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Miss W. Forest

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 17 October 2024 requesting the total number of clients who have no fixed abode as their residential address and where they receive at least one main benefit.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Addresses are stored on a client's file in multiple free-text fields. This means that staff are not restricted to standardised selections when inputting a client's address, such as a 'no fixed abode' option. As staff may choose to write freely into these fields, there is not a central way to collate this information based on a 'no fixed abode' option – for example, staff may write other statuses such as 'not known' or may spell text incorrectly.

In order to provide you with this information, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties to confirm the addresses are in a standardised format. 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.

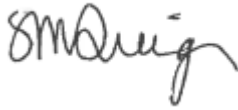
Although it does not specify whether people are on a main benefit, it may be helpful to know that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) publishes the total population of people experiencing homelessness, broken down by ethnicity and region, on their website, at the following link: [www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insights/homelessness-outlook/homelessness-indicators](http://www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insights/homelessness-outlook/homelessness-indicators).

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request regarding the addresses of Ministry clients, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**